

12 MONTH OLD WELL CHILD VISIT

What do 12 Month Olds do?

- Your child may be starting to stand on her own and may even take a few steps!
- She can say 1-3 words, including “mama” and “dada.” Keep talking to her throughout the day and explain what you are doing in simple phrases. This will help build her language skills. She also imitates sounds and simple acts and waves “bye-bye.”
- She may still be very attached to you and will likely be upset when you walk away or if she is with an unfamiliar person. She loves music and enjoys singing and dancing with you.
- She will begin follow simple directions by now (“sit down”, “close the book,” etc).
- She can turn pages in a book, put small objects into a cup and stack 2 blocks on top of each other.
- She will point to objects and watch you to make sure that you see them. When you look at books together, point to the pictures and show her how things fit together or work. Encourage her curiosity and problem solving with simple puzzles, shape sorters, and blocks. She learns by playing and is exploring her world. She still needs plenty of affection and wants you to be proud of her new skills, too!

Things to Know about Caring for 12 Month Olds

Feeding:

- Begin giving your child whole (cow's) milk now, up to 15-20 ounces per day. Focus on drinking from the cup and weaning from the bottle.
- You may continue breastfeeding as long as you like; most babies wean at this age.
- Encourage him to drink water and whole milk instead of juice. If he does drink juice, it should be 100% fruit juice and no more 6 ounces a day. Avoid sugary drinks and foods, and "junk food."
- Try to get your child to eat 3 meals and 2 snacks a day. This may be hard, because his appetite is likely dropping. Toddlers tend to "graze;" they are more interested in exploring than eating. It can also be difficult because toddlers are picky. Give him lots of healthy choices from all 4 food. Let him eat with an infant spoon and fork; watch out though - it's going to be messy!

Sleeping: Toddlers rarely go to bed on their own. It is important to set a time for bed and have a bedtime routine, like a song, book or bath. This should be a time for you and your toddler to relax and have some affectionate time. Try to avoid disruptions to the bedtime routine. Making sure she gets 1-2 naps per day will help with setting a schedule also. If she starts to wake up again in the middle of the night, it is OK for you to go in to comfort her, but make the visits brief. Try not to give her anything to eat/drink and have her fall back to sleep on her own. For her safety, check her crib and make sure that the mattress is on the lowest rung and that the sides are up.

Teeth: Clean your toddler's teeth twice a day with a soft brush and water. He does not need toothpaste until he is 2 years old. It's also time for a visit to the dentist! Help prevent cavities by stay away from sugary food and drinks. If he uses a pacifier or sucks his thumb, it's time to start thinking about breaking this habit.

Discipline: Discipline will become more and more important as she gets older. When she does something wrong, be calm and consistent. Between 12-18 months, you can start using “time-out” to discipline her - put her in her crib/playpen for 1-2 minutes until the behavior stops. Don't shake or hit her and try not to scream at her.

- We do not recommend spanking as a form of discipline either. Flood your child with praise and rewards (stickers, a special story) when she does something correctly or well.
- Try reserving the word “no” for the most important times. Try using positive statements when you can (saying “sit down” instead of “don’t stand in the chair”).
- Your focus should be on safety rather than keeping things in order.
- A good way to reduce unwanted behavior is to distract her and direct her attention to a new activity, like reading a different book. Remove tempting items from her reach and keep your instructions simple. Remember, she doesn't understand yet why she should not be doing certain things.