

motor development

At 12 months, most children:

- Pull up to a stand, or stand alone;
- Begin to walk using furniture for support (called cruising);
- Roll balls and chase them;
- Develop the pincer (thumb and forefinger) grasp;
- Put objects inside other objects;
- Bring hands together;
- Turn pages in books.

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we do things like:

- Play in sturdy cardboard boxes, large carpeted blocks, nylon tunnels and on appropriately sized climbers;
- Chase and throw large balls or tennis balls;
- Dance with props like scarves, bells, and shakers;
- Provide plenty of dump and fill activities — loading manipulatives into trucks, buckets, and shape sorters;
- Sing songs and do fingerplays with gestures;
- Play outside every day: swinging, walking, crawling, or pushing toys;
- Play with objects like spoons and bowls to practice coordination.

guidance

At Gretchen's House we:

- Have consistent and appropriate expectations for children's abilities;
- Use techniques appropriate for individual children's development;
- Re-direct inappropriate behavior;
- Distract **frustrated** children;
- Model empathic behavior;
- Set routines according to children's physical and emotional needs, e.g., allowing a very tired child to nap in the morning, if necessary;
- Narrate our activities, including transitions, so that children can anticipate what will happen next and know how they are expected to behave;
- Use affection and praise to encourage pro-social behavior.

Easy ways to make a 1 year old feel powerful:

- Provide meaningful and appropriate **choices**: about food, activities, clothing. (stick to 2 choices at a time at this age);
- Let them help with routine chores. This may not be productive in terms of clean-up but will have valuable impact on their self-esteem!
- Don't require them to participate in something because you know they will like it. Let them join when they feel comfortable.
- Imitate children. Follow their lead!

*To order reprints, contact
Gretchen's House at 734.761.2576*

Active Learning at Gretchen's House



**your child at
12 months:**

**-mover-
-explorer-
-player-**

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cognitive development

At 12 months, most children:

- Are exceedingly curious about new objects or new uses for familiar ones;
- Begin to imitate others;
- Recognize their own name and begin to react to words like “NO!”
- Understand object permanence: that objects which are out of sight still exist;
- Enjoy repetitive games.

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's house we do things like:

- Play with toys that react: pop up, make noise, or move when acted upon;
- Position mirrors so children can watch themselves and others at play;
- Provide peek-a-boo spots where children can observe from a safe perch;
- Use songs and games to help children recognize transitions and cooperate with them;
- Change available toys frequently to capture children's interest;
- Encourage **dramatic play**: imitation using familiar props and creative substitutes—using a block as a phone, for example.

language development

At 12 months, most children:

- Imitate sounds;
- Use gestures to communicate wishes, with or without simple words or sounds accompanying them;
- Respond to adult conversation;
- Have a rapidly growing receptive vocabulary and can understand much more than they can express;
- Have one or two sounds (which may or may not be real words) to refer to favorite objects.

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's house we do things like:

- Narrate our actions with the children, to help them understand what's going on and to help them acquire new sounds and words;
- Get down at the children's level to speak and interact with them;
- Use gestures in conjunction with words;
- Speak in simple sentences to assist comprehension;
- Phrase things positively. Say: “Feet stay on the floor” instead of “No climbing!” so that children know exactly what we want them to do;
- Use their special words to refer to things;
- Label their feelings or needs when they express frustration or other emotions.

social-emotional development

At 12 months, most children:

- Exhibit acute **stranger anxiety**;
- Are soothed by familiar faces or routines;
- Are easily **frustrated**;
- May appear stubborn: usually this is really a result of being egocentric and/or having a one-track mind;
- Are unable to share;
- Develop **comfort rituals** and/or adopt comfort objects like blankets or bears;
- Exhibit parallel play: play alongside others rather than *with* them.

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's house we do things like:

- Establish drop-off and pick-up routines that are comfortable for each individual child;
- Label their feelings as they have them;
- Provide plenty of duplicate toys so children are not frustrated waiting for a turn;
- Do plenty of **dramatic play**;
- Set up our space and activities so that children play in small groups, with plenty of privacy when needed;
- Play with the children rather than supervise them, so we are available to problem-solve when needed;
- Provide plenty of hugs and lap time to soothe tender feelings.