

motor development

At 18 months, most children:

- Can throw a ball overhand;
- Crawl up and down stairs;
- Walk forwards and sideways alone;
- Drop and throw toys;
- Stack things;
- Make crude lines with crayons or markers;
- Respond to music by swaying, clapping, or humming.

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

- Play with bean bags, foam balls, tennis balls and large rubber ones;
- Dance with props like scarves, bells, and shakers;
- Provide tubes and baskets for children to throw things into or watch objects roll through;
- Play outside every day;
- Play at the **sensory table** with materials like sand, cornmeal, water, rice, etc.;
- Play with manipulatives like duplos, blocks, and pop beads;
- Draw or paint on paper, chalkboards, or objects;
- Make houses and tunnels with large cardboard boxes and sheets.

guidance

At Gretchen's House we:

- Have consistent and appropriate expectations for children's abilities;
- Re-direct inappropriate behavior;
- Distract **frustrated** children;
- Model empathic behavior;
- 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;
- Provide plenty of outlets and challenges for abundant physical energy;
- Let children have time alone when they are frustrated by being part of a group;
- Give children **choices**: "You can put the toy away or Sue will do it."

Easy ways to make an 18 month old feel powerful:

- Provide meaningful and appropriate **choices** about food, activities, clothing; (stick to 2 choices at a time with this age);
- Let them help with routine chores, giving them child-sized tools: cloths, hand-brooms, baskets, etc.;
- Allow them to bring **comfort objects** like bears and blankets with them as they play;
- Encourage them to do everything for themselves that they can: walk, feed, find toys, etc.;
- Verbalize their struggles and victories.

To order reprints, contact
Gretchen's House at 734.761.2576

Active Learning at Gretchen's House



your child at
18 months:

-climber-
-tester-
-lover-

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cognitive development

At 18 months, most children:

- Can follow simple directions like “pick it up” or “clap your hands;”
- Remember routines and anticipate favorite activities or events;
- Repeat certain behaviors in hopes of eliciting a familiar reaction;
- Look for missing toys;
- Find new ways to get things done;
- Persist at challenging or rewarding tasks.

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

- Play follow the leader games like the hokey pokey;
- Keep routines consistent so children can begin to pace themselves during the day;
- Repeat favorite activities and extend that play over several days according to children's interests;
- Use a flannelboard with puppets or props that allow children to participate in storytime;
- Play with simple shape puzzles, or challenging toys like lock boxes;
- Vary manipulative accessories to encourage building and problem solving skills;
- Use prop boxes to stimulate **pretend play**.

language development

At 18 months, most children:

- Have a much larger receptive (comprehension) vocabulary than what they can actually say;
- Answer simple questions with “yes” or “no;”
- Can say the names or point to body parts;
- Use telegraphic speech: say “Milk?” to mean “Can I have some milk?”
- Cry when unable to express themselves;
- Begin to string together words like “go -bye-bye;”
- Repeat favorite words for pleasure;
- Imitate tone of voice.

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

- Interpret telegraphic speech out loud: “You would like a cup of milk?”
- Label their feelings and help clarify frustrations when they cry;
- Read books, tell stories, and sing songs daily;
- Continue to use children's invented words along with the correct name to refer to things as their vocabularies grow;
- Speak simply with children but do not condescend to them;
- Phrase things positively: say “Roll the truck,” instead of “Don't throw toys!”
- Narrate activities and give warnings so children can anticipate what's coming up.

social-emotional development

At 18 months, most children:

- Have **difficulty separating** from their parents and may become emotional at pick-up;
- Are unable to **share**;
- Begin to demonstrate self-control: respond when told “stop.”
- Show interest in older children;
- Demonstrate a sense of humor;
- Prefer **parallel play**;
- Increase imitative play and may attempt to engage with other children by offering a toy or holding hands.

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

- Remain consistent with **drop-off** and **pick-up** routines;
- Provide plenty of duplicate toys so children are not frustrated waiting for a turn;
- Play with baby dolls and encourage nurturing behaviors;
- 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;
- Celebrate accomplishments;
- Explain our actions to children. “I'm giving the toy back because she was using it. Let's find one for you.”