



## At 18 months, toddlers begin to show the first signs of independence

There are big changes in play for children as they reach 18 months and gain ground on walking, talking and play. Those tentative first steps, clutched to the furniture or a helping hand, are giving way to independent, quick and energetic dashes around the house. Their vocabulary is growing, as is their willingness to explore when familiar adults are close.

While every child grows at his or her own rate, [Help Me Grow](#) offers the following developmental milestones as typical for an 18-month-old. These markers help monitor a toddler's progress:

- Walks alone; begins to run
- Says three or more single words\*
- Tries new things with familiar adults nearby
- Points to one body part
- Scribbles with a crayon or pencil
- Shows interest in other children

For an 18-month-old, parents, child care providers and caregivers can take the following actions to encourage a child's development:

- Provide toys without small pieces
- Hold toddler and read simple stories
- Set limits that are firm, fair and consistent
- Encourage curiosity
- Play games and sing songs with movements that the toddler can imitate

Help Me Grow suggests that parents, child care providers and caregivers track a child's progress as he or she grows. To request developmental resources or a developmental wheel, which includes milestones and actions to encourage a child's progress, contact Kathy McKay at (651) 728-0400 or [kathy.mckay@metroecsu.org](mailto:kathy.mckay@metroecsu.org). For more information, visit [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org).

*\*Help Me Grow recommends that parents talk to their health care provider or refer their child through Help Me Grow if their child isn't saying single words like "mama" at 16 months old.*



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**>>Refer your toddler (at 16 months):  
If he or she isn't saying single words like "mama"**

For more information on eighteen-month milestones, please visit [HelpMeGrowMN.org](http://HelpMeGrowMN.org)

This initiative is made possible through an interagency agreement from the Minnesota Department of Education to the Metro ECSU using federal funding under CFDA number 84.181 Special Education Grants for Infants and Families with Disabilities.

