



18 months *to* 36 months

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

What skills help children learn?

Infant/Toddler Introduction

What skills do infants and toddlers use to solve problems?

One important problem-solving skill that infants and toddlers develop is the ability to pay attention to things they find interesting, even when there are distractions. For example, young infants can make eye contact with their family members even while there is music playing. Older toddlers can continue to stack a few blocks even when someone nearby is folding the laundry. This ability to concentrate on something helps them observe, gather information, build on their learning experiences and find solutions to problems.

- Children can sometimes pay attention to more than one thing at a time.
- They can notice that they put the book away with the stuffed animals and return to put it in the proper place.
- Children can search for and find a favorite book and ask a family member to read it for them.
- They can look through a basket of stuffed animals while telling you that they are trying to find the little kitty.

In the months leading up to 36 months:

- Children can play with toys for several minutes before moving on to another activity.
- They can sit with family members to read a book together.



Tips for families in helping children focus their attention:

- Try to provide consistency for your child. Even if you have a busy and changing schedule, you may be able to help him with a nap after lunch most days or read to him almost every evening at bedtime.
- You can also describe what is going to happen next to help your child prepare for the next activity: "We are going to the park after we get dressed and have breakfast." When you describe what is going to happen next, your child feels more secure and less surprised by the events of his day.

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- Organize her toys in simple ways, for example, a basket for her cars, another one for her blocks and another for her stuffed animals.
- Read him books and sing familiar songs. While he likes new songs and books, he also loves to revisit the familiar ones.
- Notice the kinds of activities your child is interested in and provide a variety of experiences and materials to support that exploration. For example, if your child is interested in drumming, you can provide several different surfaces for her to drum on – empty milk cartons or juice jugs, metal pots or buckets, cardboard boxes. Every child has things they love to do. When children have opportunities to pursue their interests, they engage in more learning and develop more skills.

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