



# 8 months *to* 18 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.

- Toddlers rely on familiar routines around them to help them organize their thoughts and behavior and focus their attention.
- They like predictability and may expect favorite songs to be sung the same way every time (and be upset if someone changes the words).
- Toddlers may insist on following the same bedtime routine every night.

In the months leading up to 18 months:

- Young toddlers can usually pay attention to the adult's voice even if there are other sounds in the room.
- They can play with one toy or activity for a while.



Tips for families in helping children focus their attention:

- Try to provide consistency for your toddler. Even if you have a busy and changing schedule, you may be able to help her with a nap after lunch most days or read to her almost every evening at bedtime. Consistency helps your child to develop internal rhythms and to learn how to predict what is going to happen next.

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- You can also describe what is going to happen next, to help your toddler get ready for the next activity.
- Organize her toys in simple ways, for example, a basket for her cars, another one for her blocks and another for her stuffed animals. Organizing things helps your child to learn that things fit into categories and to know where to find and put away toys.

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- Read her books and sing familiar songs over and over. While she likes new songs and books, she also loves to revisit the familiar ones.

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