

1.13 12 to 14 Months Old

Intellectual Development

- ★ The use of everyday objects: Your toddler now understands how several objects are typically used. You will see how much he understands about various objects by watching him play with different things.
- ★ Object permanence: He now follows the movement of an object as you move it from one hiding place to another, but since he is still unable to conceptualize movements that he cannot see being performed; you will notice that he won't look for an object in a certain place if he didn't physically see you hide it there. (Establish this for yourself by holding a small object in the palm of your hand. Close your fingers over the object in your child's full view, so that he knows that you're hiding the object in your hand. Now move your hand in under a towel and leave the object there. Remove your empty fist and hold it in front of your child. He will look for the object in your hand, not under the towel. And, when he doesn't find it in your hand, he will not yet consider that you may have left it under the towel, since he did not SEE you put it there.)
- ★ He is interested in the unique characteristics of things: During the first six months of the second year, you will notice that your child actively and deliberately explores his world to find out how objects, events or situations are all "different".
- ★ You will notice that he now, for the first time in his life, deliberately tries out different actions on one object to discover how that particular object will react in different ways for every action. (He does not simply repeat the same action over and over. The second or third time he drops an object, he may hold his arm in a different position or drop the object on a different surface.)
- ★ He learns to use different objects appropriately. During the first three months of the second year, a child starts to play in a way that is described as "early functional play." You can thus now encourage your child to perform appropriate actions with objects when playing. Your child may, for instance, use a hairbrush to brush his hair. (You may also notice him inappropriately brushing the floor, some blocks or the dog!)
- ★ He solves problems by means of trial-and-error. He is still not able to think or reason to discover the most effective way to do something. He simply tries out several different things and waits to see which one works.
- ★ He is able to categorize objects in a very simple way. He will, for instance, know that he can eat a banana and a pear, but not a wooden block.
- ★ He is not yet able to form "pictures in his head" and he consequently has no understanding of any situation or event other than what is happening in the moment. His concept of time is very limited.
- ★ He cannot reflect on things, as he doesn't know enough language to be able to formulate thoughts or to play around with ideas in his mind. This explains why language development plays such a prominent role in the development of intellectual skills.
- ★ Imitation: Your child is now an excellent imitator. As compared to what he did when he was younger, he now imitates actions that aren't necessarily part of his own

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repertoire of actions. He is able to alter familiar actions in order to imitate new, unfamiliar movements. (He does, however, continue to find it much easier to imitate movements that he has previously performed by himself.)

Activities:

719. Develop your child's understanding of object permanence by teaching him to follow the movement of an object as it is moved from one hiding place to another. Play each of the following games a few times before moving on to the next, until he has grasped the concept.

Step 1

Show your child one of his favourite toys. As soon as he reaches out to grab it, cover **the toy** partially and encourage him to try and find it. Use a plain, non-transparent cloth in a solid colour.

Note: It is important to use one of your child's favourite toys; otherwise he may not be interested in looking for it. Some children of this age love strings of brightly coloured beads. You may also use a box or a pillowcase to hide the toy.

Step 2

Show your child a toy. This time, as soon as he reaches out to take it, cover **both the toy and his hand** completely with the cloth. Encourage him to look for the toy.

Step 3

Put a toy on the floor. As your child reaches out to take it, cover **only the toy, not your child's hand**. Ask him to find the toy.

Step 4

Put the cloth, which you've been using up to now, on the floor to your child's left and place another cloth of a different colour on the floor to his right. (Make sure that the second cloth is also in a solid colour since a multi-colour cloth may distract your toddler.) Now hide the toy **underneath the new cloth**. See if your baby still looks for the toy under the first cloth, or whether he is able to act on what he has just perceived with his eyes. Repeat the game a number of times; alternate hiding the toy under the two cloths. Encourage your baby to lift the correct cloth as you play.

Step 5

Add a third cloth of a different colour (also a solid colour). Hide the toy about five to seven times under one of the cloths in no particular order. Encourage him to look for it. Make sure not to move the toy from one cloth to another until he finds it.

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720. Encourage your child to solve little problems.

- ✓ Show him one of his favourite toys and then put it just out of his reach on a flat pillow on the table. (You can also use a pillowcase.) Praise him when he grabs the pillow by the corner and pulls it closer to bring the toy within reach.
- ✓ As soon as he understands that he can get the toy by pulling the pillow, you can try to outwit him by holding the toy a couple of centimeters above the pillow. If your child doesn't pull the pillow, but rather points to the toy, reaches for it, looks at you, or asks you for it, you can know for sure that he realizes that you are joking with him.
- ✓ While he is sitting in his high chair, let him play with one of his favourite toys. Tie a piece of string to the toy and slowly lower it to the floor. Tie the other end of the string to the near side of the tray of the high chair. Ask him to get his toy by pulling on the string. If needed, tug on the string and draw his attention to the moving toy.

721. Ask "yes" or "no" questions to help lay the foundation for the development of your child's future analytical skills. Ask your own question, starting with the words: "is this" and then **answer the question yourself**. Point at anything other than your child's father and ask: "*Is this Daddy?*" Shake your head and say: "*No! This isn't Daddy!*" Then point to Daddy and ask: "*Is this Daddy?*" Look excited and say: "*Yes, this is Daddy! Hallo, Daddy!*" Repeat the game with other people and objects that are very familiar, e.g.: "*Is this Bruno?*", "... *your bottle*", "... *your nappy?*" etc.

722. During this time teach your child that certain things belong in certain places. Choose a few pairs of objects that can fit into or onto each other, e.g. a telephone and a receiver, a pot and lid, a sock and shoe, a cup and saucer, a teaspoon and a mug, a hat and a doll or a baby bottle and its teat. Keep these in a special container to take out when you play with your baby. Demonstrate over and over again how to put the lid on the pot, push the sock into the shoe, put the cup onto the saucer, the hat on the doll's head and attach the teat to the bottle. Give running commentary on what you are doing. Repeat key words, such as: "*Here is the lid. Look, Mommy has the lid. Where does the lid go? The lid goes on the pot? Mommy puts the lid on the pot. Now it's your turn. Here, you put the lid on the pot.*" (Assist him throughout, especially when he tries to screw the teat onto the bottle.) Towards the end of the month, after you have repeated this over a period of several weeks, you can start to teach your baby to point to the lid on his own when you ask him where it is. He will also know where the lid belongs when you ask: "*Where does the lid go?*"

723. Make a "garage": Cut a "door" into one of the short sides of a shoebox. Show your child how to push a toy car through the opening by first holding the car and rolling it into the opening; then releasing the car and using his fingers to push it in deeper from behind. (If you don't have a suitable car, make your own by covering a small fruit juice box with paper and drawing windows and wheels onto it.)

Note: This game is not only beneficial for the development of motor planning skills, it also helps your child to practice problem solving skills and create an opportunity for him to discover spatial concepts like "*in*", "*out*" and "*through*" on a sensory level.