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## **Play and Cognitive Milestones**

### **12-24 Months**

#### **12-18 Months**

##### **Play**

- Imitates unfamiliar actions
- Uses pretend play props with self (e.g., sits on doll's chair, eats pretend food)
- Imitates household activities (e.g., mopping floor)
- Points out familiar facial features on self, adults and doll
- Enjoys simple play schemes (e.g., stirs in cup and feeds doll)
- Pretends with props that resemble realistic object
- Stacks blocks
- Fills container with small objects
- Orients personal accessories roughly (e.g., sunglasses to head)

##### **Cognitive**

- Smiles upon attaining mastery of a self-generated goal
- Uses a tool to obtain a desired object after demonstration (e.g., scooping)
- Uses trial and error to problem solve
- Begins to group objects that share physical or functional similarities
- Begins to name objects/people not present in the same room
- Performs daily routines
- Uses purposeful gestures to make wants known

#### **18-24 Months**

##### **Play**

- Recreates imitation at a later time
- Infers when modeled act is too difficult and responds with refusal
- Begins simple role playing
- Includes self and partners in a play routine
- Demonstrates awareness of another person's point of view
- Uses same play routine with variety of objects (e.g., stirs cup, bowl, pitcher)
- Uses two related objects in play
- Enjoys finger painting, play-doh, water play, sand play

##### **Cognitive**

- Demonstrates awareness of adult standards (e.g., aware of broken toy)
- Begins to anticipate the outcome of an action (e.g., roll ball off couch)
- Identifies misplaced objects or object that does not belong to group
- Plays with shape sorter and/or completes simple wooden knob puzzles
- Locates hidden objects
- Observes ongoing activities and recreates them later
- Avoids dangerous objects
- Increases memory for a location

#### **Red Flags**

- Does not play with toys in a variety of ways, including pretend play (e.g., feeding a doll)
- Limited interest in exploring different toys and play objects
- When playing with toys tends to bang, drop or throw them rather than use them for their purpose

*\*\*If your child does not meet most of these milestones by 24 months, consider scheduling a developmental therapy evaluation.*