Infant and Toddler Physical Development

The best way for an infant or toddler to prepare for the next step in physical development is to master the one he or she is currently working on. Below are milestones of physical development you can expect during the first three years.

**Young infants (birth to 8 months) — during this time, most infants:**

- First movements are reflexive (inborn, automatic behaviors) - use sucking and grasping reflexes
- Five senses are working and ready for further development (touch, taste, sound, sight, smell)
- Turn head toward a familiar voice
- Slightly raise his head up to look around while lying on his stomach
- Clench hands into fists
- Begin to hear differences in similar sounds
- Lift themselves using their arms
- Reach for things (closer to 3 months)
- Roll over
- Reach for and grasp objects
- Shake and play with objects
- Bring an object they are holding to their mouths
- Crawl
- Grasp and pull objects toward their body
- Move toys and objects from one hand to the other (between 4 and 8 months)

**Mobile Infants (8 to 18 months) — during this time, most infants will begin to:**

- Sit up by themselves
- Stand up or make stepping movements with support by holding onto nearby furniture or your hands
- Feed themselves finger foods
- Drink from a sippy cup
- Make marks with a crayon or marker
- Walk
- Roll a ball
- Older mobile infants can stack and line up blocks
- Point to objects
- Pick up objects between their thumb and index finger (pincer grasp)
- Pick things up while standing up
Toddlers (18 to 36 months) — during this time, most toddlers will continue to build on their earlier skills and begin to:

- Walk up and down stairs with help
- Move and sway to music
- Color or paint by moving their entire arm, scribble with markers or crayons
- Turn handles and knobs
- Pull and push toys
- Carry toys while walking
- Learn to run
- Jump in one place
- Kick a ball
- Turn pages of a book
- Draw a circle
- Hold a crayon between thumb and fingers