

Discover new experiences with your baby. Take him for walks. Let him go with you to new places, such as the library, grocery store, movies, etc.

## Twelve to Eighteen Months

### Separation Anxiety

Your baby's protest at your leaving the room—sometimes referred to as separation anxiety—is a healthy reaction. Rest assured, it does not mean your baby will become an overly dependent adult. It is part and parcel of normal development.



Separation anxiety requires both cognitive advances involved in the development of object permanence [you continue to exist in your baby's mind even when you are out of sight] and a special need for you that cannot be met by someone else. Separation anxiety represents your baby's fear of losing you. In the earlier months, your baby probably woke up from a nap screaming; a year later, just calling for your baby from another room, may be enough to help her wait for you. This change happens when your baby can remember who you are [even when you are not with her] and is confident that you will come back to take care of her. Before your baby develops object permanence, when you leave the room it is if you no longer exist—it's little wonder she screams when you are gone.

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By twelve to eighteen months, your baby understands that you are a distinct entity. [On one day you may wear a suit and on another day you may wear blue jeans, but you are still the same person.] At the same time, your baby begins to realize that you exist even though you are no longer in the same room. As babies develop greater motor control, they can move away

## BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Practice water safety: teach your child to swim, do not let your child play around any water (lake, pool, ocean, etc.) without adult supervision (even if he is a good swimmer), always wear a life preserver or safety vest when on a boat, and childproof the pool by enclosing it in a fence with a self-closing, self-latching door.

[Baby Gifts and Gift Baskets](#) provides timely and practical information for new moms, as well as gift ideas for pregnancy, baby showers, and to celebrate birth:

### New Baby Gift Ideas

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from their parents and can see them from a distance, which helps babies to perceive themselves as separate individuals. This separateness helps babies begin to develop a sense of self.

Peek-a-boo, one of the most delightful games played with babies is supportive of your baby's beginning differentiation of "self" as separate of you. When you cover up your face, to a young baby, you really have disappeared. To a baby at the beginning of this stage, the absence of your visual presence is cognitively interpreted as your disappearance. When you uncover your face, you magically return. For an infant, the emotions of surprise and the joy of being reunited are very real in these games.

## Baby's First Bike & Sesame Street Friends Gift



Baby will love playing with all these Sesame Street plush characters and anticipating their first ride on this fun Radio Flyer Scoot About Trike. The trike features 4 wheels with wide front easy-glide wheels for stability, furniture friendly front bumper, adjustable seat, easy steering and a ringing bell (suitable for children ages 12 months to 3 years). With the trike, we include a Cookie Monster hand puppet, plush Big Bird, mini plush Elmo, a luxury baby blanket and teether rattle toy.

**Price: \$ 160.00**

[Buy Now!](#)

Peek-a-boo continues to hold magical powers for the eighteen month old. Toddlers cover up their faces with their hands so that they no longer can see us. What is so amusing is the toddler's belief that she cannot see you, you cannot see her either. Although the toddler has begun to recognize her existence as separate from you, she is not yet able to take on another person's perspective [that is, put herself in someone else's shoes].

### A Secure Attachment to You

By twelve months of age, your baby has formed a meaning relationship to you. [Here we are speaking to mothers, because women have traditionally been the primary caregivers for babies. But much of what is discussed here applies to fathers as well.] Psychologists refer to this as a baby's "specific attachment." Not only does your baby clearly prefer you, but he also strives to avoid your absence and can use your presence to give himself security.

People used to talk about this relationship in terms of its intensity-how much and how loudly did a baby cry when his mother left the room. They believed that babies with more intense reactions loved their mothers more. We now realize that the intensity of a child's response to separation from his mother is less important than the degree of security that he can gain from her

presence. In fact, psychologists now classify children in terms of whether their attachment is secure. A secure attachment is shown with babies who seek closeness with their mothers. After a separation, when their mothers return to the room, these securely attached babies approach and look up to their moms.

Having a secure attachment is good for babies' long-term development. Securely attached babies end up having better peer relationships and emotional stability during the first six years. Of course, the seeds of this relationship begin early in life with the mother's handling of their babies. Studies find that mothers, who responded sensitively and appropriately to their babies in the first two to six months of life, are more likely to have babies with these secure relationships. Surprisingly, the baby's characteristics early on seem to play little role.

### **Recognition of Self**

About this time, babies can also recognize themselves in the mirror. One study examined how babies reacted to their mirror reflections. Lipstick was put on their noses, and observers watched to see if the babies would try to wipe the lipstick off. The babies all learned how to recognize themselves in the mirror and wipe off the lipstick somewhere nine and twenty-four months.

Because babies are becoming more aware of their separateness, they begin to recognize how vulnerable they really are without you there to take care of them. Try to think about how it feels to have your feet pulled out from under you. That's how your baby feels as she starts to realize that she is not you.

This happens right before your baby takes her first independent steps. Tolerance for frustration and stressful events diminishes. At times your baby seems like an "emotional wreck"-quick to cry and not easily pacifiable. You wonder what happened to your nice calm baby. Some psychiatrists have suggested that the apprehension associated with walking may be fear of loss of support from the parent. All of a sudden, your baby is alone and separate. Independent walking perhaps marks the discovery of the solitary "self."

### **Conflicting Feelings**

Your baby will experience conflicting emotions as he masters walking. At the same time he is hanging on to you, he is pushing you away. With his first steps, striving towards greater independence, he seems to be saying, "Look at all the things I can do! I can walk and go where I want." In the next breath, showing his extreme dependency, your baby seems to say, "Stay here, I can't be without you for a moment." All of this is healthy and normal.

### **Development of Attachment to a Transitional Object**

By this time your baby may have established a specially loved blanket or stuffed animal [a "lovey"] that accompanies her to bed and to scary places. This lovey is called a transitional object because it helps your baby in the transition between extreme dependency on you and the move toward independence.

Your baby's lovey provides security and comfort, particularly in fearful situations. For your baby, this selected object is said to serve the purpose of keeping a part of you with her even while you are gone. It is important to respect your baby's desire to have this lovey with her.

Some babies maintain this attachment to a special lovey into the preschool years and beyond. There is no predetermined time for an abandonment of a lovey; your

child will put hers aside when she is ready. In most cases the attachment is normal, and will be outgrown naturally.