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1-Year-Old Milestones: Physical Feats



Judy Koutsky
June 8, 2017

He walks! He runs! He climbs! Your little one is gaining a new sense of independence and mobility with these 1-year-old milestones.



You might be pleasantly surprised (and maybe a bit bittersweet) about just how quickly your little one is growing. Your babbling baby no longer needs to be constantly held -- but he does need to be [carefully watched](#) as he learns to walk, run and climb stairs on his own. What 1-year-old milestones should you expect during this time? Your baby is becoming steadier on his feet, fine-tuning his fine motor skills and becoming more confident in his movements.

And read [our guide to developmental milestones for kids](#) .

Movin' and Groovin' Milestones

Standing momentarily without support usually occurs around 13 months, and standing alone -- without holding on to anything -- occurs around 14 months. Of course for most parents, it's the first steps that evoke the most excitement. "The majority of babies will begin walking between 12 months and 15 months, though some will walk a little earlier or a little later. As babies master walking forward, they will also learn to walk backwards, many by around 18 months," says [Dr. Rebecca Isbell](#), an American-board-certified University of Virginia pediatrician. Make sure you have gates at the top and bottom of the stairs, as kids will start crawling up stairs between 14 and 22 months.

By the time your child turns 2, he should be able to walk up and down stairs, alternating between his left and right foot (he'll probably be holding on to the railing). He should also be able to kick a ball (maybe not so far, but he should make contact!), run easily without falling, pedal on a tricycle, and squat and bend without falling over, says Dr. Steven Shelov, pediatrician and author of "[Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5](#)."

What's going on to promote all these physical 1-year-old milestones? Your little one is going

through a growth spurt. His legs and arms are getting longer and leaner (say bye-bye to that adorable baby fat), his posture is becoming erect and he's developing some nice muscle tone. All of this is prompting him to get moving and explore the world around him.

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), your little one's fine motor skills are also improving at this age, too. Between 12 and 24 months, it will become easier for him to pick up small items with his index finger and thumb (instead of using his whole hand). Turning pages at story time, drawing and stacking will all become activities that your tot excels at. As your child nears his second birthday, he may even begin to show a preference for one hand over the other.

Cognitively, your baby is developing problem-solving skills ("How do I kick the ball? Pull my foot back and strike the ball with my toes"). He's doing many things by trial and error until he masters it, so he'll need to practice each skill before he becomes a pro. His play is also becoming more complex (giving his stuffed animals food and water and singing them songs to help them fall asleep).

How to Support Your Child

It's important to let them use their imagination at this age, says Dr. Isbell. For instance, if you give your tot a battery-operated game, he'll learn how to play it only one way. If you give him blocks, he can use his imagination to build skyscrapers, dinosaurs, make-believe monsters -- a million different things. Plus, knocking everything down and rebuilding from scratch means he's mastering some of his 1-year-old milestones.

Encourage your child to accomplish new feats, but don't stress if he seems a bit behind his peers. If your neighbor's little one started walking at 11 months and your child still isn't walking

at 13 months, it doesn't necessarily mean that your tot is delayed. "My youngest child, at 16 months, was still not walking. She was quite content to be perpetually on my hip," says Dr. Isbell. "One day, her sisters were out stomping in the rain puddles in their boots. She wanted to be put down to get in on the puddle stomping too, but wasn't able to because she couldn't walk. You could see in her eyes that something clicked, and that evening she tried and tried until she walked." The moral? Every child goes at his own pace. Don't worry if your little one is a bit behind -- he'll catch up when he's ready.

For more on milestones, read this [Overview of Milestones for 1 Year Olds](#).

Judy Koutsky is the former editorial director of KIWI magazine, a green parenting publication. She was also executive editor of [Parenting.com](#), AOL on Parenting and Baby TALK. Follow her on [Twitter](#).

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