1-2-3 Years Milestones
Article

Infant Brain Development - Understanding the Early Years

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When your toddler turns 18 months, his thinking skills begin to change drastically. He's now able to understand more words, and he's able to have a mental image of something when it's out of sight. He's able to remember things that happened in the past and relive the moment. Thanks to this, he is on his way to being able to follow simple directions.

At first, simple tasks like fetching something from another room are easy for him to understand, just as long as he's not distracted by something else that he likes. He is learning to assert himself and trying to be more independent.

By the time he is 24 months old, he's able to follow two and three-step directions, such as picking up a ball and a blanket and putting them in his room. But it's still not something he can do all the time, and you should only expect him to follow your direction about half of the time.

Toddlers seek challenges, but might shy away from doing something that seems too difficult to them. Sometimes, what you might understand as unwillingness to follow directions might just be that he is overwhelmed by the task. The tone in which you speak to him can help reduce his fear. You may also have to guide him through the directions step by step, then express your approval of his efforts.

In order to encourage him to follow directions better, give him tasks that have meaning, like helping you wash the vegetables or set the table. When he feels that his actions are meaningful, it will boost his self-esteem.