Talking and Feeling
• Show your child how to use words.
• Use words to describe your child’s feelings.
• Describe your child’s gestures with words.
• Use simple, clear phrases to talk to your child.
• When reading, use simple words to talk about the pictures.
• Try to give choices. Allow your child to choose between 2 good options, such as a banana or an apple, or 2 favorite books.
• Your child may be anxious around new people; this is normal. Be sure to comfort your child.

A Good Night’s Sleep
• Make the hour before bedtime loving and calm.
• Have a simple bedtime routine that includes a book.
• Put your child to bed at the same time every night. Early is better.
• Try to tuck in your child when she is drowsy but still awake.
• Avoid giving enjoyable attention if your child wakes during the night. Use words to reassure and give a blanket or toy to hold for comfort.

Safety
• It is best to keep your child’s car safety seat rear-facing until she reaches the seat’s weight or height limit for rear-facing use. Do not switch your child to a forward-facing car safety seat until she is at least 1 year old and weighs at least 20 pounds.
• Follow the owner’s manual to make the needed changes when switching the car safety seat to the forward-facing position.
• Never put your child’s rear-facing seat in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger airbag. The back seat is the safest place for children to ride.
• Everyone should wear a seat belt in the car.
• Lock away poisons, medications, and lawn and cleaning supplies.
• Call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222) if you are worried your child has eaten something harmful.
• Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs and guards on windows on the second floor and higher. Keep furniture away from windows.
• Keep your child away from pot handles, small appliances, fireplaces, and space heaters.
• Lock away cigarettes, matches, lighters, and alcohol.
• Have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and an escape plan.
• Set your hot water heater temperature to lower than 120°F.

Temper Tantrums and Discipline
• Use distraction to stop tantrums when you can.
• Limit the need to say “No!” by making your home and yard safe for play.
• Praise your child for behaving well.
• Set limits and use discipline to teach and protect your child, not punish.
• Be patient with messy eating and play. Your child is learning.
• Let your child choose between 2 good things for food, toys, drinks, or books.

Healthy Teeth
• Take your child for a first dental visit if you have not done so.
• Brush your child’s teeth twice each day after breakfast and before bed with a soft toothbrush and plain water.
• Wean from the bottle; give only water in the bottle.
• Brush your own teeth and avoid sharing cups and spoons with your child or cleaning a pacifier in your mouth.

What to Expect at Your Child’s 18 Month Visit
We will talk about
• Talking and reading with your child
• Playgroups
• Preparing your other children for a new baby
• Spending time with your family and partner
• Car and home safety
• Toilet training
• Setting limits and using time-outs

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222
Child safety seat inspection: 1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org