

Age-Appropriate Behaviors

Under 1 year:

Spontaneous crying, fussing
Smiles
Screeches
Staring
Startle reflex
Sensitivity to sudden or loud noises
Pincer grasp vs. release mechanism
Grabbing at instruments/easily distracted when offered another (out of sight, out of mind)
Teething, mouthing instruments

12–18 months:

Constant movement—walking, running, etc.
Trouble with transitions—entering/leaving the room, putting props away
Focused on “cause and effect” —throws the egg, or pushes a friend in order to see what happens
May be very clingy—separation is a big issue at this age
Transitional objects (blanket, doll) are very important



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18 months–2 years:

Frustration, frustration, frustration!
Emotional highs and lows
Ambivalence—dependency vs. autonomy
Separation issues peak
Needs choices for empowerment
Tantrums
Hitting
Pushing
Biting
Throwing

2–5 years:

Social interactions vs. parallel play
“Pack” mentality
Limit testing
Control issues
Structure can be comforting
Growing independence and competency
Toilet learning
High drama around emotions
Vying for attention
Decline in active participation

