

Speech and language development

18 to 24 months

What can I expect as my child learns to talk?

While children learn at different rates, you can look for typical patterns at certain ages. The skills listed here are in the order you may see them in your child.

1. Child may understand many words (about 300) but may not be able to say them all. Child can follow simple directions and identify very familiar pictures.
2. Child is interested in hearing what's happening now and learns new word meanings by being shown: for example, "Put the block in the box" and "Let's walk down the stairs."
3. Child talks to self during play and makes environmental sounds ("vroom" for a car, "moo" for a cow).
4. Child uses about 50 recognizable words, can name most familiar objects, and begins to use words to describe things.
5. Child begins to combine 2 words into sentences but may be hard to understand much of the time.

What can I do to help my child?

Use simple language to talk with your child about what you are both doing. Expand on what your child says. For example, if your child says "Juice," you might respond "More juice?" or "Your juice is all gone."

Toys and activities provide stimulation and something to talk about. Ideas include:

Purchased toys

- action toys (buses, airplanes)
- balls
- books

- building toys (large Duplos®)
- dolls and clothing
- drums
- large riding toys
- telephone
- wagons (for riding or sitting)

Homemade toys and household items

- clothespins and coffee cans
- felt board and shapes
- jars and lids
- pots, pans, and spoons

Favorite activities

- exploring the outdoors
- feeling different textures
- reading books together
- sandbox play
- singing
- water play

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please ask your child's doctor or nurse practitioner.