



Every Child a Talker
Worcestershire



My child is 18 months to 3 years old

Speech, language and communication skills – when should I be concerned?

Between 18 months to 3 years, what do toddlers usually do?

Language develops at a fair rate during this period! Children often understand more than they can say but are eager to communicate and begin to talk all the time. They can become frustrated if they can't get their message across.

By 2 years, young children:

- ✓ Understand simple instructions like 'give the cup to baby', 'kick the ball'
- ✓ Use 50 words or more, like 'car', 'biscuit', 'cat'
- ✓ Put 2 or 3 words together, 'more juice', 'mummy car'
- ✓ Enjoy pretend play like making mummy a cup of tea, feeding a toy monkey

By 3 years, they:

- ✓ Understand longer instructions such as 'who's got your ball?', 'give daddy the big car'
- ✓ Put 4-5 words together to make sentences, 'me want that ball', 'teddy eating big banana now'
- ✓ Ask lots of questions
- ✓ May still muddle some sounds, e.g. say 'pider' instead of 'spider' but are usually understood by others

The following are suggestions of the things you may want to look out for when checking your child's language development.

By 2 years, talk to your health visitor or speech and language therapist, if your child:

- Is slow to follow simple instructions
- Is not pointing to body parts asked for, e.g. 'where's your nose?'
- Is not saying 25 recognisable words
- Is not beginning to put 2 words together

By 3½ years old, most children are talkative. Seek advice from a speech and language therapist if:

- They are struggling to turn ideas into sentences
- The language they use is jumbled or difficult to understand
- They are unresponsive or slow to follow instructions
- People outside the family find it difficult to understand them

Between 2 – 3 years, seek advice from a speech and language therapist if:

- Your child points or shows you what they want rather than saying it
- They only say single words instead of joining words together into short sentences
- They are slow to respond to your instructions
- They rely on being shown what to do rather than being told
- You cannot understand most of what they say



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For more information:

Universally Speaking: The ages and stages of children's communication development from birth to 5 years

<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/universally-speaking.aspx>

Find the Talking Point Parent Progress Checker here: <https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/progress-checker-home/>