



Language Development in Children

Language is what people use to communicate with each other. When we use language, we can understand (receive) and give (express) information.

Most children develop language in stages. You can help your child develop his language by knowing more about these stages, as follows:

	1 to 2 Years Old	2 to 2 ½ Years Old
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows routine, familiar directions with cues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands 1-step commands (e.g. "Come here")
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates appropriate use of objects in play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands simple concepts (e.g. big/small, in/on/under)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies photographs of familiar objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises actions in pictures (e.g. sleeping, eating)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands inhibitory words (e.g. cannot) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands pronouns (e.g. me, my, you)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates body parts on self, caregiver, or soft toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands up to 300 words (e.g. body parts, food, clothing, animals)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands action words in context 	
Expressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses fun sounds (e.g., animal sounds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Says 50 to 200 words
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses single words or single word approximations (1-1½: 3-50 words; 1½ - 2: about 50-200 recognisable words) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies words and phrases said by others
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses vocalisations and gestures to request for toys or food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests for wants and needs using words (e.g. food, drink, toilet)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answers "What's this?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names familiar objects in photographs (e.g. animals, food)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses some familiar verbs and adjectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks simple questions (e.g. "Where is it?")



Milestones during the first 2 years

Children develop at different rates, but they usually are able to do certain things at certain ages. The following are some general developmental milestones:

1 to 2 Years Old	2 to 2 ½ Years Old
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows simple commands, first when the adult speaks and gestures, and then later with words alone. • Gets objects from another room when asked. • Points to a few body parts when asked. • Points to interesting objects or events to get you to look at them too. • Brings things to show you. • Points to objects so you will name them. • Names a few common objects and pictures when asked. • Enjoys pretending (for example, pretend cooking). He will use gestures and words with you or with a favourite stuffed animal or doll. • Learn about 1 new word per week between 1 1/2 and 2 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points to many body parts and common objects. • Points to some pictures in books. • Follows 1-step commands without a gesture like "Put your cup on the table." • Be able to say about 50 to 100 words. • Says several 2-word phrases like "Daddy go," "Doll mine," and "All gone." • May say a few 3-word sentences like "I want juice" or "You go bye-bye." • Be understood by others (or by adults) about half of the time.

When to be concerned

If your child's development seems delayed or if he shows any of the behaviours listed below, do bring him to see your doctor or paediatrician. In addition, do inform the doctor if your child has stopped speaking or is unable to do things that he used to do before.

- Doesn't seem to notice if you are in the room
- Doesn't seem to notice certain noises (e.g. seems to hear a car horn or a cat's meow but not when you call his name)
- Acts as if he is in his own world
- Prefers to play alone; seems to "tune others out"
- Doesn't seem interested in or play with toys but likes to play with objects in the house
- Has intense interest in objects young children are not usually interested in (e.g. he would rather carry around a flashlight or ballpoint pen than a stuffed animal or favourite blanket)
- Can say the ABCs, numbers, or words to TV jingles but can't use words to ask for things he wants
- Uses words or phrases that are unusual for the situation or repeats scripts from TV

Source: KK Women's and Children's Hospital and American Academy of Pediatrics

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