

Tips for Talking: children aged 2 - 3 years

Children may now be playing more with other children and sharing things with others. Often children will be enjoying familiar stories and rhymes and joining in with these.

Children will develop language skills at different rates, but at this stage typically children will be:

- Understanding simple 'who', 'what' and 'where' questions.
- Understanding longer instructions – for example 'make teddy jump' or 'where's mummy's coat?'
- Using a wider range of speech sounds. However, many children will shorten longer words (like banana – 'nana') or have difficulty where lots of sounds happen together in a word – for example spider – 'pider'.
- Using up to 300 words.
- Listening to simple stories with pictures.
- Asking lots of questions – keen to find out the name of things and learn new words.
- Putting words together to make short sentences – for example, 'daddy cup' or 'want more juice'.
- Children will often have problems saying more difficult sounds



At this simple stage, children will sometimes sound as if they are stammering, trying to share all of their ideas before their language skills are ready! This is perfectly normal – just show you are listening and give your child plenty of time.

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Here are some simple ideas to encourage children's language development at this stage:

- Expanding your child's sentences can show how words fit together – for example, if a child says 'dolly hair' you can expand this to 'brush dolly's hair' or 'dolly's hair is brown'.
- Often children enjoy helping – sharing your daily activities provides excellent opportunities for commenting about objects and actions, as well as extending your child's vocabulary.
- Use puppets, pictures of characters in a story, as well as pictures in a book to help your child listen to and enjoy stories. Don't be afraid to tell a story more than once; repetition helps children to understand and remember the language that they hear.
- Give your child the correct example or model for speech sounds and words. This is especially important if they are having problems saying a certain word or sound. If you correct them or make them say it again, you can make them feel anxious or frustrated. Simply repeat what they have said using the right words and sounds; with time they will be able to do it themselves.



If you have concerns about your child's speech or language at this stage, let your Health Visitor know. She can make an appointment with a Speech and Language Therapist for you.



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