

# Your 2 Year Old!

A parent's guide to creating language-rich environments



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## 2 year old children start to build **SENTENCES!**

Your 2 year old has become quite the talker! She says words all the time and doesn't have to use gestures to tell you something. She understands and says new words everyday. She combines 2 or more words together to ask for something, like "More milk?" She gets you to do something, like "Ball down" and she tells you about something, like "Puppy eat food."

Your child is also a great copier. Whether you like it or not, she repeats everything she hears. She understands more than she can say right now. She follows simple directions, like *Get your shoes and give them to Daddy* but often she says, "No!" By 3 years of age, your child will say at least 3 to 4 word sentences and use too many words to count!



## Everyday and everyway - How children learn language

Your child is learning language every day. He learns about his world by seeing, touching, listening, tasting, and doing. Any activity that you do together is a chance to learn. Speak, sing, and talk about books with your child in your language.

As a parent of a 2 year old, you play the most important role in your child's learning. You already are doing many things with your child. It makes a difference how you talk with and respond to your child during these times. Use everyday activities to build your child's language.

Use everyday activities to help language develop. These include bath time, bed time, eating, dressing, driving, shopping, walking to the mailbox, going to the park, playing, and cleaning up. Repeat words and short sentences that go along with these activities.

## Everyday tips - How parents make the difference!

Turn everyday moments into language-rich activities. Try these tips in your language.

### When talking...

- **Use short and simple sentences.** Say, "Kick the ball," or "Get your shoes" instead of "You can kick the blue ball hard," or "Go get your brown shoes and put them in the closet."
- **Give your child time to talk.** Sometimes she needs up to 5 seconds before answering you, or to remember the words.
- **Add a new word** to what your child says. If she says, "Daddy's shoe" you can say, "Daddy's **stinky** shoe!"
- **Repeat what your child has said using the correct words or sounds.** You don't have to make her say it correctly.

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### When playing...

Children learn a lot while playing. This is a great time to encourage language.

- **Let your child be the leader.** Watch how he is playing. Talk about what he is doing or what he is playing with.
- **Play face to face with your child.** Sit on the floor, lay on your stomach, or bend down low.
- **Use the same words and sentences over and over** during an activity so your child will have a chance to learn them.

### When reading...

Reading and language go together. Reading helps with language learning. Good language skills help with learning to read and write. All of these skills are important for school. Try these ideas.

- **Look at books together everyday.** Keep them in a place your child can reach.
- **Pick books that use the same words or sentences over and over.** Look for lots of pictures and not too many words on each page.
- Read the words on the page or **make up your own story** to go with the pictures.
- Use family photos and make up your own stories.
- Ask your child to "read" a familiar story to you or her stuffed animals.



Want more information on speech and language? Read the *Talk Box Resource List*.



### When singing...

- **Sing songs over and over throughout the day.** Make them part of your routines. For example, "This is the way we brush our teeth..." or "Clean up, clean up..."
- **Sing slowly** so your child can hear all of the different words and try to sing along.
- **Make up actions** to go along with the words.
- **Pause and let your child fill in a word,** like "Twinkle, twinkle, little ...".
- If you use a different language at home, sing songs in that language too.

### For more ideas, go to...

- [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)
- [www.playingforkeeps.org](http://www.playingforkeeps.org)
- [www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/)
- [www.wondertime.go.com](http://www.wondertime.go.com)
- <http://toddlerstoday.com>

## Activities to try...

### Children learn by doing!

- Bring different toys into the bathtub. Talk about the toys.
- Let your child help with cooking. Talk about what you are doing. Say, "Stir, stir," or "Pour water in."
- When driving, talk about the different vehicles and things you see. Say, "There's a big bus," "I see a blue dump truck," or "The horse is running."

**Check out this month's activity sheet for more ideas!**

Use unusual activities to encourage new words and ideas. These may include going to a birthday party, going to the dentist or doctor, seeing a ladybug on a rock, seeing a broken toy, looking at spilled juice, or making a snowman.

## What to expect

### By 2 years your child should...

- Use 2 words together like *More juice* or *Mommy eat*.
- Say at least 50 words.
- Start using simple word endings like *ing* (*eating*), plurals (*boats*), and possessives (*baby's bottle*).
- Understand 2-part sentences like *Go get your coat and bring it to me*.

### By 2½ years your child should...

- Use words that name objects (*ball, shoe*), describe (*big, hot*), and talk about actions (*kick, eat*).
- Point to many body parts and clothes and point to pictures in a book.

**Ask about the *Speech Sounds and Talking and Listening* checklists for more information on development.**

### By 3 years your child should...

- Use at least 3 to 4 words together in sentences or questions.
- Use more of the little words, like *is, a, or the*.
- Follow 3-part directions, like *Go get your coat, bring it to me and wait by the door*.



## When to get help

You should be concerned if your child...

- Does not use 2 words together or does not do all of the other things listed at her age.
- Is not saying many different sounds.
- Avoids eye contact and appears to ignore others.
- Had some words but has "forgotten" them.



## Where to get help

Are you concerned about your child's speech and language development? Speech-language pathologists can help. To find one in your area...

- Contact your local health unit
- Call Health Link Alberta:
  - Calgary area: 403-943-LINK (5465)
  - Edmonton area: 780-408-LINK (5465)
  - Toll free: 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
- Go to [www.healthlinkalberta.ca](http://www.healthlinkalberta.ca)

2 year olds make many sounds at the beginning and end of words like *m, p, b, w, t, d, n,* and *h*. They use vowels correctly most of the time. Parents understand between 50 to 75% of their toddler's speech.



Go to [www.parentlinkalberta.ca](http://www.parentlinkalberta.ca) for more Talk Box ideas.

It is never too early to help  
your child with speech  
and language development.