

Helping Kids Discover and Develop Language

10-12 MONTHS

1. The child says his/her first word.

The child's first words may not sound perfect or may not be used correctly. For example, the child may use "dog" to refer to any four-legged animal. With practice, this production will become clearer and will be used appropriately.

SUGGESTIONS:

- hold the object beside your mouth and name it before giving it to your child. This allows him/her to see your tongue and lips move as you make the sounds.
- name objects your infant shows interest in
- always use the same name for an object (e.g., only use "buggy" for "baby carriage", instead of "buggy", "carriage", "pram".)
- use simple names (e.g., use "car" instead of "automobile")
- use specific names for toys (e.g., say "Fluffy" for the infant's stuffed rabbit)
- repeat the same word over and over again. Don't worry about using it too much because this is how children learn best (e.g., "Oh truck, nice truck, big truck")
- follow your child's lead (i.e., play with the toys with which your child wants to play)
- when speaking to your child, use simple language (i.e., 1-2 word sentences at the most)
- stress new words in your speech

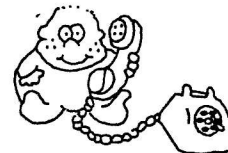


2. The child follows simple commands.

For example, the child responds appropriately to "Put that down", "Come to Mommy", and "Give it to Daddy".

SUGGESTIONS:

- accompany your commands with gestures to provide more visual information
- keep your commands short or break them down into small parts



3. The child seems to understand simple questions.

The child may respond to questions such as: "Where's the ball?" and "What is that?"

SUGGESTIONS:

- exaggerate your intonation and facial expressions and use gestures when asking questions
- to help your child better understand "Where" questions, hide an object while your child watches, and then immediately ask "Where is the ___?". Gradually lengthen the time between hiding and seeking.

4. The child gestures and/or vocalizes to indicate wants and needs.

For example, he/she may ask for very common objects such as a ball by name and/or may gesture toward the object.

SUGGESTIONS:

- use gestures to accompany your own vocalizations
- occasionally withhold an object so that your child must ask for it in order to obtain it
- set up situations so that necessary objects are missing (e.g., bring out the juice container but do not put glasses on the table)

5. The child starts speech gesture games.

For example, the child tries to involve the caregiver in "peek-a-boo" or "patty-cake".

SUGGESTIONS:

- follow your child's lead when he/she starts a game
- choose one or two speech games (e.g., "Itsy-bitsy spider"; "Peek-a-boo"; "This little piggy") that you can play over and over so that your child becomes very familiar with them. This will increase the likelihood that he/she will initiate play.

