

Helping Kids Discover and Develop Language

2 YEARS

1. The child uses 2-word sentences.

For example, the child may use: agent + object (e.g., "Mommy sock."), agent + action (e.g., "Tommy go."). At this stage, a child expresses meaning through the tone of his/her voice and the ordering of words in his/her sentences. The child may use word combinations that adults do not use (e.g., "allgone juice", "more up", "no down").

SUGGESTIONS:

- when your child produces 1 word, you can immediately use that word in a 2- or 3-word phrase (e.g., Child: "Mommy"; Adult: "Mommy help"). Increasing the length of your child's production is called expanding.
- use 2-word sentences in your speech that you think your child can produce. Include words in your sentences that you have heard your child use.
- talk about what your child is doing while he/she is doing it (e.g., say, "Truck go" as your child pushes his/her toy across the floor).



2. The child has a vocabulary of approximately 50 words.

SUGGESTIONS:

- you can increase your child's vocabulary by exposing him/her to new experiences
- follow your child's lead and label new actions and objects in which your child shows interest
- verbally interact with your child as much as possible
- use daily routines (e.g., bath time, getting dressed, setting the table) as opportunities to increase vocabulary
- label objects, people and actions when reading to your child

3. The child follows 2-step commands that are accompanied by gestures.

For example, the child understands the request: "Pick up your toys and put them in the toy box" as Mom points to the toys and toy box.

SUGGESTIONS:

- use commands which involve simple words
- when you are giving longer directions such as "Find your doll and give it to Sue", break them into smaller parts or provide your child with hints about what he/she is to do (e.g., before repeating the second part of the above command, you might say, "You have the doll. Who gets it?")
- activities such as baking cookies, making juice or doing crafts allow you to give your child simple directions

4. The child uses such pronouns as "me", "mine", "my", and "you".

These pronouns are not always used appropriately.

SUGGESTIONS:

- use sorting the clothes with your child as an opportunity to use pronouns. You can talk about to whom the clothing belongs (e.g., "My sock", "Your sock", "This is mine")
- while looking at family pictures talk about the people in the photos using pronouns (e.g., "Where is mom? Here she is.")



5. The child uses negative forms such as "not" and "no" in combination with another word.

For example, the child may say: "No shoe" when he/she expects his/her shoes to be in a place where they are not; "Not go" when he/she does not want to leave.

SUGGESTIONS:

- if your child just says "no" or "not", expand his/her statement by adding a second word (e.g., if your child says: "No" while you are pouring juice, respond with "No juice")