

If you would like any information or advice about
your child's talking, please contact
Bright Start Speech and Language Therapy:



phone

0203 316 1897

Learning to Talk A Parent's Guide

1 to 2 years

All children learn to talk at slightly different speeds.
The information in this leaflet is only a guide.

This leaflet was produced by Whittington Health
Speech and Language Therapy Early Years Service



Learning to Communicate The Second Year

Children's listening and talking skills continue to develop as they grow into toddlers.

12—18 Months

- Around 12 months of age, babies begin to understand that sound has meaning
- By 12 months children may say their first word
- They may understand simple commands, e.g. "Come here", "Sit down", and respond to and imitate actions e.g. in songs & rhymes
- They may say a real word in the middle of babble, e.g. "goobedu—ball—baba"
- They may concentrate on their own choice of activity and have difficulty moving attention to something else
- Your child will begin to show you things by pointing
- By the age of 18 months, toddlers may be saying between 6 and 20 words

18 months—2 years

- Children have a 'language burst' during this period, suddenly saying lots of new words
- Children may play with a toy they have chosen themselves for 5 minutes at a time
- Your child understands simple instructions with 2 main words, e.g. "Where's Daddy's shoes?"
- By 2 years, she may also join 2 words together, e.g. "Daddy ball", "Ball go", "More juice"
- By 2 years, children say around 50 words, although these won't always sound clear.

How Can You Help?

Help children to learn new words as they explore their surroundings.

Play - let them be in charge!

- Allow children to choose the toys they want to play with.
- Wait a few moments for your child to start playing before you join in.
- Allowing children to make their own choices and lead in play encourages them to communicate and play for longer.



Talk about what they are doing

- Talk about what your child is doing in play and daytime activities.
- Keep it simple, keep it short! This helps your child understand and learn new words that they are interested in.

*E.g. at bath time - "more bubbles! Pop!",
when playing - "you're pushing the car".*