

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



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# Learning to Talk A Parent's Guide

**3 to 4 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 Fourth Year

Throughout the pre-school years talking improves and more and more surprising sentences are used.

## 3 — 3 ½ years

- Children may understand up to 4 main words in a sentence, e.g. "Give your small doll some tea and biscuits"
- They are continuing to use many new words and may often use the wrong word in a sentence, e.g. "I goed to the park"
- They may hold conversations with several people
- Children are interested in listening to longer stories and also enjoy telling stories or talking about what has happened to them.

## 3 ½ — 4 years

- Your child may understand more than 4 main words in a sentence
- Your child is talking in longer and more complex sentences and may be using more small words such as "a", "and"
- Your child enjoys asking many questions at this age, about how and why things work
- Children often like to finish things they have started e.g. looking at a story book, drawing a picture

# How Can You Help?

When children reach this age, they have many new experiences and continue to learn more words based on new events.

## Wait for your child to start the talking

When children have had an interesting experience, they may want to tell you about it. If you wait for your child to talk to you, your child will be encouraged to talk more about it.

## Praise your child

When your child is helpful or listens to your requests, give your child praise e.g. "Thank you for helping to tidy up". This allows your child to learn new words to describe what your child is doing. It also helps children to know what she they are doing well.



## Repeat back using the right words

Sometimes your child may leave out a word or use the wrong word in a sentence, e.g. "Daddy runned to the shops". You can repeat what your child says using the correct word which will help with learning the rules of the language, e.g. "Yes, Daddy ran to the shops". Remember not to ask your child to repeat it.