

# Your 1 Year Old!

A parent's guide to creating language-rich environments



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## 1 year olds say their **FIRST** words!

At last, your child has said her first word! It's time to celebrate! This is one of the many steps your child makes in becoming a *talker*.

By the time your child is 1 year, she has learned a lot about talking. She has been practising by making lots of sounds and babbling. Your child has learned how to get your attention and ask for things without using words.

It's exciting to hear your baby say "up!" instead of saying just a few sounds and raising her arms up. Before you know it, she will be copying you and saying many new words. Your child's first words may be hard to understand. Sometimes a word like "ba" can mean *ball*, *bottle*, *bus*, and *bye*. Often, you are the only one who understands your child.



## Everyday and everyway - How children learn language

Your child is learning language every day, even if he is just learning his first words. He learns about the 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 1 year old, you play the most important role in your child's learning. You are already 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 and routines to help language develop. These include bath time, bed time, eating, dressing, diaper changing, shopping, making lunch, going to the park, playing, and cleaning up. Talk and sing while you are doing these activities. Use the same words, phrases, and songs each time.

## Everyday tips - How parents make the difference!

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



### When talking...

- **Use short simple sentences**, like *Get your shoes* or *The sun is up*.
- **Use the same words over and over** so that your child has a chance to learn them, like *ball*, *a big ball*, *a round ball*, or *kick the ball*.
- **Respond when your child makes sounds or says a word**. Repeat her word, ask a simple question, or simply smile and wait for her to say something else.
- **Wait for your child to talk**. Sometimes she needs up to 5 seconds before answering you.

Use the same words over and over so that your child has a chance to learn them.



### When playing...

- **Let your child be the leader**. Join in and play. Follow along with what he is doing or playing. Let him show you what to play with. Talk about it.
- **Take turns during an activity**. For example, when he puts a block in the bucket, you put a block in. Wait for him to put another one in. Say, "Block in" or "My turn...your turn."
- **Be face to face** with your child. Lie down or sit on the floor.
- **Add a new word** to what your child says. If he says "up" you can say, "Go up" or "Up high."



### When reading...

Reading and language go together. Reading helps with language learning. Good language skills make learning to read and write easier. Even though school is a long time from now, these skills are very important.

- **Look at books together** throughout the day. Take turns flipping the pages, naming, and talking about the pictures.
- **Put strong, durable books in a place your child can reach**. Keep special books out of reach so they don't get ruined.
- **Pick books that have only a few words** on a page and have big, simple pictures.
- **Read the same books over and over**. Your child likes the repetition.
- **Bring a book with you** when you are going to a doctor's office. Read while you're waiting.

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



## When singing...

- **Sing songs over and over and throughout the day.** Sing while you are dressing your child, brushing teeth, cleaning up, or driving.
- **Put your child's name into the song.** Make up your own song. Use tunes you know.
- **Sing the songs slowly** and make up actions to go with the words.
- If you use a different language at home, sing songs in that language too.

## Activities to try...

### Children learn by doing!

- When you are buying groceries, name the food you are putting into your shopping cart. Talk about the food.
- Name body parts while you are giving your child a bath. Name clothes while she is getting dressed.
- Go for a walk outside. Talk about all of the things you see – the cars, the trees, the bugs, the street signs, and the airplanes. Jump over all of the sidewalk cracks. Find a puddle and splash in the water. Talk about what you are doing.

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



**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>

Use unusual activities to teach new words and ideas. These may include going to the pet store, going to the dentist or doctor, watching a worm crawling on the sidewalk, looking at a broken toy or an empty box, going to a birthday party, or going on a family holiday.



## What to expect

By 1½ years, your child uses the sounds that are easiest to make like *m, p, b, d, w,* and *h*. By 2 years, your child can also say *t, d,* and *n*. Most vowel sounds are correct like *ah, ee, I, oh,* and *oo*. Parents understand 50 to 75% of their toddler's speech.

### By 1 year your child should...

- Communicate by crying, laughing, looking, showing, reaching, grunting, and making sounds.
- Babble using a variety of sounds such as "bababa, didi", or "upup, bupbup".
- Recognize words for common objects like *cup, shoe,* and *juice*.

### By 1½ years your child should...

- Understand and say at least 10 words.
- Point to people and body parts like *eyes* or *nose*.
- Point to pictures in a book.

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

- Use 2 words together, like *More milk* and *Mommy eat*.
- Say at least 50 words.
- Start to use *ing* (*eating*), plurals (*boats*), and possessives (*baby's bottle*).
- Understand 2-part sentences, like *Get your ball and put it in the box*.

**Ask about the *Speech Sounds and Talking and Listening* checklists to get more information about development.**

## When to get help

You should be concerned if your child...

- Does not babble or make many sounds.
- Used some sounds and words but seems to have "forgotten" them.
- Is not trying to talk, interact, or make eye contact with you.

## Where to get help

Are you concerned about your child's hearing or 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)



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.