

How communication develops from 18 months to 3 years old

At 18 months your toddler will probably try to:

- Say some words- these may only be understood by family members at this stage.
- Point to tell you what they see.
- Look to people and objects as you are naming them e.g. “where’s granny?”
- Copy everyday sounds such as transport and animal sounds e.g. ‘beep beep’, ‘neigh’.
- Sing along to songs that you both know.
- They might also be chatting to you in babble – don’t worry; this is normal!

At 2 years of age your child may be:

- Using around 50 words spontaneously.
- Starting to join two words together e.g. “my teddy.”
- Understanding words and phrases without cues.
- Using these sounds in their speech – p,b,t,d,n,m.
- Using pretend play e.g. feeding dolls or teddies food.



By 2½ years your child might be:

- Using a wider range of vocabulary.
- Putting two words together to tell you things.
- Understanding simple questions and instructions such as ‘where’s mummy’s coat?’
- Using the sounds p,b,t,d,n,m and w.

At around 3 years old a lot of children will be trying to:

- Begin using 3 + words together to say what’s happening.
- Use questions including use of ‘where?’, ‘what?’ and ‘who?’
- Enjoy simple stories with pictures.
- Understand longer instructions, and responding to common action words and describing words.



How you can help:

- Have some time every day for play.
- Switch off the TV and radio so it's quiet when you are playing.
- Chat about what you're doing together.
- Listen to what your child is saying and add some new words, eg "Great, that's a big, spotty ball."
- Use lots of praise, for example, "Good talking!"

Remember children develop at different rates. If you have any queries regarding your child's development please speak to your Health Visitor or contact your local Speech and Language Therapy department.