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Developmental Milestones - One to Two Years

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In a child's second year of life, speech and language skills are starting to emerge. The child will begin understanding and using more vocabulary, as well as using early-developing speech sounds in words.

Parents and others in the child's environment can help speech and language develop by using short words and sentences the child can imitate, playing with sounds at bath time and in the car, and reading to the child every day.

The following lists show behaviors that a child will probably exhibit throughout his or her second year of life. Every child is unique, and these lists should be used as a general guide. If a child is not meeting the developmental milestones listed below, it is recommended to consult a speech-language pathologist to determine further action.



Twelve to Eighteen Months

- Understands 50-75 words
- Uses 3-20 "real" words, even if they are not produced correctly (e.g. *doppit* [stop it], *appuh* [apple], *baw* [ball], *too-duh* [toothbrush])
- Points to correct place/answer when asked a question
- Points to objects when named, such as in a book (e.g. "Where's the dog?")
- Points to a few simple body parts
- Uses nonsense words and babbles while pointing
- Follows simple one-step directions ("Roll the ball")
- Makes animal sounds when asked ("What does a cat say?")
- Uses words like *mine*, *up*, *more*
- Imitates words
- Excited to show off things and experiences

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(cont.)



Eighteen Months to Two Years

- Understands approximately 300 words
- Uses 50 words appropriately, mostly nouns
- Uses *p*, *b*, *m*, *h*, and *w* in words
- Still babbles and uses jargon, but speaks often with mostly real words
- Uses language to meet needs (“*I want...*”), to protest (“*No, Daddy!*”), to exclaim (“*Uh-oh!*”), and to entertain or get a reaction with silly talk
- Wants to read same stories or play same games over and over again (“*Again!*”)
- Can answer simple questions in a storybook by pointing (“*Who is sleeping?*”)
- Uses rising intonation to show a question, even if words don’t make sense
- Shakes head or nods to answer yes/no questions (“*Do you want a snack?*”)
- Can shake head or nod to answer questions about an object’s name (“*Is this a bottle?*”)
- Can follow related two-step directions (“*Come here and give me your milk*”) if attending and in the mood

- Points to body parts of stuffed animals or other family members
- Uses language functionally, not just when naming pictures in a familiar book
- Starts to use some verbs (*eat*, *more*, *go*, *sleep*) and adjectives (*big*, *little*) along with nouns
- Joins two related words to make one word (*geddown* for “get down”)
- Begins asking the names of things while pointing and using rising intonation (“*what dat?*”)
- Speaks at an appropriate volume
- Can answer “*What’s your name?*”
- Joins in songs and nursery rhymes, often only getting one or two words at the right time
- Attends to others’ facial reactions
- Speaks with many pauses between words
- Typical utterances at this age:
 - o *Danwit ... goo’ ... Mommy.* (Sandwich good, Mommy.)
 - o *Nigh’-nigh’?* (Night-night?)
 - o *Go ‘side?* (Go outside?)
 - o *Do ‘way!* (Go away!)



Resources:

Hamaguchi, Patricia McAleer. 2010. *Childhood Speech, Language & Listening Problems – 3rd Edition*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
“What should my child be able to do?” accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/12/>

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