



Let's Talk

Getting Help When Your Toddler Isn't Talking

“ I am really worried about my son, Seth. He's talking a little bit but still doesn't sound quite like other kids. I asked my friends and family what to do. They said things like 'My son was slow too. Now he won't stop talking' and 'Don't worry, he'll outgrow it.' But what if he doesn't? I'd feel so guilty if I waited and then found out that I should have done something earlier. ”

—Andy

How Do I Know if My Child Needs Help?

You know your child better than anyone. You listen to him talk and know how he listens. You also hear other children who are the same age. You might compare your child's speech to the way that other children talk. All of this might make you wonder if your child is developing speech and language the right way.

Every child is different. Children may talk at different ages, but they go through the same stages when learning to talk. This makes it hard to know if your child is falling behind or just taking a bit longer to talk. If your child is learning more than one language, it can take him a little bit longer to talk. This is okay.

Still worried about your child's speech and language? Make an appointment to see a speech-language pathologist, or SLP. The earlier your child gets help, the better.

What Does an SLP Do?

SLPs work with children who have speech and language problems. The SLP will talk to you about your child's development. The SLP may ask you:

- How your child is doing in other areas, like walking and using her hands
- How fast your child learns new words or how many languages she is learning
- If you and others can understand the words your child says
- If you are worried about anything else about your child

Fast facts

- Not all children speak at the same age.
- Children go through the same stages when learning to talk.
- Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, can help.



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The SLP may:

- Watch how your child plays and communicates
- Check your child's hearing
- Show your child some pictures and try to get her to say some words
- Test how well your child understands, called receptive language, and how well she talks, called expressive language
- Listen to how well your child makes sounds

The SLP will help you figure out what to do to help your child. Your SLP will give you ideas for ways to help your child talk. Your child can work with the SLP if she has a speech or language problem.

What Can I Do to Help My Child?

Here are some things that you can do with your child to help at home:

- Read to your child.
- Listen to what he says.
- Talk to your child in the languages you speak.
- Don't correct what he says, but repeat it back the right way.
- Add to what he says. If he says "ball," you say, "Yes, that is a red ball."

“ I took Seth to see an SLP. The SLP told me that he is doing okay but needs encouragement to talk. I'm enjoying my time reading with Seth every night. He likes it too. We talk a lot about what happens in the story. He even asks for books by name. I'm so glad we didn't wait to see the SLP! ”

—Andy

Don't wait if your child isn't talking. Help is available.

To learn more about speech and language development or disorders or to find an SLP near you who has been certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), visit www.asha.org or call 800-638-8255 or (TTY) 301-296-5650.

My SLP's name is

Appointment

Compliments of
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
and