

Language development from age 0 to 5

naître
ET grandir



The child's journey



The parent's journey

0-12
months

Getting ready to talk

My baby:

- Reacts to sounds and faces. **They cry to communicate** their needs.
- Makes sounds (coos) voluntarily at 3 to 6 months. Looks me in the eye, smiles, and reacts to my voice.
- **Begins to babble** at 6 to 9 months.
- Becomes increasingly communicative at 9 to 12 months, often pointing to objects, for example.

As a parent, I:

- Talk to my baby often, from the moment they are born.
- Look my baby in the eye **and smile at them when they try to communicate** with sounds or gestures.
- Gesticulate and mimic the sounds they make.
- **Read, sing songs, and recite nursery rhymes** to my baby.
- Name the things that interest my baby in a clear voice.

Dadada...
Mamama!



**12-24
months**

First words!

My toddler:

- Says their first word around 12 to 16 months (Daddy, Mommy, sleep, again, milk, etc.).
- Understands more words than they use in their speech. **They also understand simple instructions** (e.g., "Come here").
- Recognizes objects in a book and can point to them if asked.
- **Begins to string two words together at 18 to 24 months** (e.g., "Daddy gone," "More milk").

As a parent, I:

- Help my child articulate what they're trying to say.
- **Speak clearly** to help my child understand me.
- Name the things we see at home or while out on walks.
- Comment on what my child says and **add details to enrich their vocabulary**. For example, if they say "apple," I reply: "Yes, the apple tastes good, doesn't it?"



**2-3
years**

Getting chatty

My child:

- Is more frequently using two- and three-word sentences.
- **Understands and is using a growing number of words.**
- Is beginning to understand abstract concepts (high, low, big, etc.).
- Understands **two-step instructions** (e.g., "Go get the ball and throw it back").
- Can better understand simple stories in books.

As a parent, I:

- Show my child that I am interested in what they're saying to encourage them to speak.
- **Provide examples of sentences** by talking to them often.
- Ask questions to understand what they're trying to tell me.
- Don't correct my child when they mispronounce a word, **but rather say it correctly** so they can learn.
- Often read with my child, letting them comment on what they see and asking them questions.



**3-4
years**

Complete sentences

My child:

- Understands lengthier instructions.
- Still has **difficulty understanding the concept of time** (yesterday, today, tomorrow).
- Has a growing vocabulary. **They can form complete sentences** but sometimes forget little words.
- Can talk about what they did during their day.
- Is easier to understand (most of the time!).



As a parent, I:

- Talk with my child about their games and interests, as this encourages them to talk.
- **Make a game of organizing objects or pictures into categories with my child.** This gets them to mentally organize their vocabulary.
- Correctly repeat any words they mispronounce to show them how to say it.
- **Ask questions when I don't understand what they're saying,** rephrasing if necessary.
- Read my child stories featuring problems that need to be solved.
- Explain the meaning of words they don't know.

**4-5
years**

More complex language

My child:

- Understands more complex explanations and instructions.
- **Can reflect on different aspects of a story** and the characters' emotions.
- **Has a diverse vocabulary.** They use longer sentences that include details.
- Pronounces almost all sounds correctly.



As a parent, I:

- **Show that I'm interested in what my child says** because it makes them want to talk even more!
- Read stories to my child and discuss the characters' emotions.
- Ask questions that begin with "why" or "how."
- **Continue to explain the meaning of words they don't know.**
- Tell them jokes. Their sense of humour reflects their level of language comprehension.