

1-2 years: New Words

Written by Rachel Betzen

1-2 years: New Words- Respond to your child's beginning words and expand on what she says. Talk about what you're doing and the things in your child's everyday environment, linking words to play time, mealtime, bath time and the bedtime routine. You can help your child understand language within a larger context, by using expansion.

For example, when your child says "car" and points to a toy car, talk about the car as you play with her. You can talk about whether you are moving the car slow or fast, that the car can go on a street, that people ride in a car, etc. Follow your child's lead, talking with her and expanding on what she says, and she will build a strong vocabulary.

Older babies and young toddlers still appreciate board books with only a few familiar pictures on each page. Reading the same books over and over again will help your child grasp the language involved. Around 18 months to 2 years of age, your child may be ready for more difficult books. Look for books that have a simple story line, that have objects or environments your child can relate to, and that can help introduce basic concepts (colors, shapes, opposites, etc.). This stage of expressive language is very important not only for building good communication skills, but is also crucial for sound awareness, which will later help your child as a beginning reader.

Older toddlers show a rapid expansion of their language skills as they begin to combine words to create longer sentences. This is the time your child will be organizing language and building on that hierarchy as her vocabulary continues to grow. The search for meaning and understanding of the world around her grows as she adds to the base of words she understands and uses.

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