



HELPING YOUR TODDLER WITH TALKING

COPY AND ADD MORE

Copying will motivate and encourage your child to interact with you. Copying also shows your child that you are interested in what they are doing, and might encourage them to imitate you back.



- Follow your child’s lead by copying their actions for example splashing in the bath. You could add in a word to extend this activity e.g. ‘Splash!’
- Try imitating with another toy rather than expecting your child to share his/her toy. You can extend this by adding sound effects or an occasional word to describe what you are doing.

When you copy your child, it tells them that you have heard their message. If your child is using words, you can extend their language by adding to their attempts:

- Say it back to your child the way they would if they could. For example:
Your child says: “Ded car.”
You say: “Yes, red car.”
- You can help to introduce new vocabulary add one or two more words. For example:
Your child says: “teddy there.”
You say: “Yes, put teddy on table.”
- As well as adding new words you can add new to what your child says. For example:
Your child says: “Cat!”
You say: “It is a cat, it says meow!”

In general you should use language that is one step above your child’s level

| If your child ... | You should ... | Example |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Uses no words | Use single words | “Milk?” |
| Uses single words | Use 2 word phrases | “Want milk?” |
| Uses 2 word phrases | Use 3 word phrases | “Want more milk?” |

When we think about adding new words it is important to think about what is useful for toddlers and small children.

Children need words that help them to interact in their everyday world when they get started with talking. Saying colours, shapes, letters and numbers comes later when your child has a good foundation of everyday helping words.



| Focus on using words like: | Instead of using words like: |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>people and objects ball, banana, milk, daddy doggy, swing, sock, cup</p> | <p>Abstract concepts</p> <p>shapes numbers colours letters numbers</p> |
| <p>things your child can do eat, brush, push, wash, give, splash, cry, jump, dance</p> | |
| <p>helping words mine help more gone again</p> | |
| <p>positions in on up on</p> | <p>positions behind, below, between</p> |

Remember, the best language learning comes from interaction with an interested adult. Everyday routines like bath time, meal time, bed time and play time give lots of opportunities to copy and add language!