

**Language Development  
0-12 months**

What to expect	What you can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First words emerge at 12 months however language development is dependent on a number of foundational pre-verbal skills including:</li> <li>• Sustained attention which involves turning and gazing at objects and maintaining interest for increased lengths of time in activities self-initiated, peer-led and adult-led</li> <li>• Eye contact/joint attention which involves sharing interactions by looking meaningfully between objects and people during play</li> <li>• Play development including functional play skills, pretend play and development of increasingly complex play sequences (e.g. tea party)</li> <li>• Causality/object permanence, which also reflect cognitive development. A child realises that they can make requests and expect a result (cause and effect) and label items that are not present in the immediate environment</li> <li>• Motor and vocal imitation</li> <li>• Communicative intent, for example requesting objects, seeking attention to self, responding and acknowledging</li> <li>• Turn-taking</li> <li>• By 12 months, children should be using gestures with 'pointing' emerging around 9 months</li> <li>• They should recognize their own name, responding by looking and interacting with their communication partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe, Wait, Listen               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Observe: Follow your child's lead, watching their body language, actions, gestures and facial expressions – notice what your child is looking at and interested in and share in the interaction with them</li> <li>○ Wait: stop talking, lean forward and look at your child expectantly – encourages child initiation and response. When they communicate something, respond immediately with interest</li> <li>○ Listen: pay close attention to sounds and words and be careful not to interrupt. Join in and play with them</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Teach your child to do what you do, like clapping your hands and playing peek-a-boo. Use gestures like waving and pointing</li> </ul>



- They typically understand a few words, pointing to familiar named objects and following simple commands such as those containing 'in', 'up' and 'bye bye'
- Approximate vocabulary development following first word emergence:
  - 4-6 words by 15 months
  - 20-50 words by 18 months
  - 200-300 words by 24 months
- Children begin to use two-word sentences by 18 months and refer to themselves by name
- At 24 months, children are typically use 3 word phrases occasionally and early pronouns 'I' and 'it' are produced
- 12-26 months – children use intonation to ask yes/no questions e.g. 'go to park?', but use limited wh-questions such as 'what?', 'where?' and 'who?'



- Read to your child. You don't have to read every word, but talk about the pictures. Choose books that are sturdy and have large colourful pictures. Ask your child questions such as "what's this?" and try to get them to point to or name common objects
- Use language stimulation strategies such as:
  - Self-talk - talking to your child during daily routines such as bath time, feeding time and as they are getting changed. Talk about what you are doing and where you are going during the day. Tell them who or what they will see.
  - Expansions - add on to what your baby says. E.g. when your baby says, "Mama," say, "Here is Mama. Mama's getting your bottle. Where is baby? Here is baby."
  - Modelling – model the use of gestures like pointing and name things in the environment such as body parts, food and other objects and people
  - Use short, simple sentences
  - Allow time for your baby to respond
  - Ask questions to encourage responses such as pointing or looking at named objects or people

#### References

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