



TIPS FOR MY TWO YEAR OLD

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This week we talk about some more specific strategies you can use for a two year old who isn't quite hitting their language milestones.

If your child is finding many of these targets difficult, you may find some additional strategies in the previous post – [how do I get my one year old to start talking.](#)

Please remember all children develop at their own pace. This post is designed to help your child, if you do have any concerns. It may also be helpful for parents who are out of ideas on how to continue to help develop language.



TARGET SKILL	HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD
RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE	
Identify simple body parts (e.g. nose, tummy)	<p>Talk about body parts when changing nappies and dressing your toddler. Name each body part, point to it on your child and yourself.</p> <p>Massage your toddler and name each body part. Provide sensory input with feathers, sponges, a hair brush, etc. Again, name the body parts.</p>
Begin to follow 2-step instructions (e.g. get the ball and sheep)	Give your child opportunities to follow 2-step instructions. If testing whether they can follow the instruction, ensure that you are not accompanying the instruction with a gesture or eye-gaze that may support understanding of the instruction. This can be used as a support strategy however. You may also start with one-step instructions e.g. 'get your hat'. You may get another adult to help your child follow the instruction by physically assisting, for example by helping the child walk to the hat.
Understand simple questions ("where's your hat?", "who's that?")	Ask your child simple 'who', 'what' and 'where' questions. Provide choices e.g. 'is it grandma or grandpa?' Offer the appropriate answer if your child is unable to respond. We would consider a two year old to have understood the question if

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	they respond with a gesture (e.g. pointing) or simple words (e.g. "there").
Identify pictures in books when named	Last week, we talked about the importance of books. As your child gets older, they should be able to listen to books for longer periods of time. Tell them what the pictures are and ask them to point to different objects.
Answer yes / no questions	Ask questions that allow your child to respond to such questions e.g. "do you want.." while offering a preferred and non-preferred item. Follow through with the option they have chosen. If you know they asked for the wrong item, offer the option again soon after you gave them the (wrong choice). This time offer the correct response and accompany with a head shake or nod.
EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE	
Use more than fifty words such as "no", "gone", "mine", "teddy"	<p>If your child's vocabulary is quite low, pick words that are meaningful for your child. Create many opportunities that will allow you to demonstrate (model) use of these words. Say the word on its' own and REPEAT it a few times e.g.:</p> <p>Child: points to their ball You: Ball. You want the ball (emphasise 'ball). Here's the ball (as you give them the ball)</p>
Begin to put 2 words together (e.g. "mummy car", "teddy eat")	<p>This skill typically only develops AFTER a child has a minimum of 50 words. If your child hasn't got around 50 words, please first implement the strategies two rows up.</p> <p>If your child has over 50 words, start to use simple AND grammatically correct sentences e.g.:</p> <p>Child: Bubbles You: More bubbles / blow the bubbles / I like bubbles (note there are two KEY words plus the grammar).</p>

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	<p>The trick is to add one key word to what your child is already saying.</p>
<p>Use some pronouns instead of names (e.g. “me”, “mine“)</p>	<p>Be mindful of referring to yourself as ‘I’ and ‘me’ (rather than mummy / daddy). Refer to your child as ‘you’ rather than by his / her name.</p>
<p>Use a variety of communicative intents</p>	<p>It is important to encourage children to communicate to request, comment, protest, direct, etc. Children will often begin by using requests (more, help, etc). To Help develop use of other communication intents, demonstrate the use of different word types. Talk about things that you like / don’t like / see / hear to make comments. Protest by using words such as no / not that one. Allow your toddler to give you instructions on how to make a smoothie / which way to get to the park.</p>
<p>Use a range of sounds in play, babble or words: p, b, m, t, d h, w, n</p>	<p>If your toddler only has a few of these sounds, play games to encourage imitation of the other sounds. Use animal noises to encourage development, where appropriate. Encourage your toddler to teach his / her soft toys how to say the (new) sounds.</p>
<p>Will use objects in play (e.g. pretend to drink from a cup)</p>	<p>Ensure your toddler has toys that enable play and language development. Pretend play toys (e.g. tea sets, doctor’s kit, dress-ups, Duplo blocks, etc) are all great ways to expand a toddler’s imagination, while developing their play and language skills. Play with your child and demonstrate how the toys can be used to pretend. Extend to two actions e.g. fill the cup with tea and feed it to the doll / teddy.</p>

GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Consider a hearing test, especially if your toddler has a history of recurrent ear infections and / or colds.
- Get down to your child's level ensuring that they can see your eyes and face.
- Use the correct words for objects. It's very cute when children use their own words for objects. However, if this continues, it can become difficult to teach the correct word and won't be 'cute' when they are 6 or 7.
- The same applies for using appropriate grammar. I am constantly reminding my husband that it's "daddy's car" and it's our job to teach our toddlers correct grammar rather than adopting the way our 2 year olds speak.
- Playing with your child is so important. Have fun while playing with your child.
 - Allow the child to play with the toy/s that are of interest to them (even if it's not what YOU had planned to play with).
 - Observe what interests your child and build on these interests.
 - As adults, we often get bored of toys quicker than the child. Be guided by your child about when it's time to change toys.
- Use lots of specific praise when your child makes any attempts. This tells the child that you are listening and exactly what skill you are aiming for and gives them a reason to try again.
- Sing songs and let your toddler fill in some of the words.
- Read to your child as often as possible. Even if your child only sits for a couple of minutes, they are gaining valuable exposure to books. Pick books that have bright colours with a few large pictures on each page. Books are a great way to teach new vocabulary and concepts. As your child shows increasing interest, don't feel compelled to stick to the story in the book. Use the opportunities to talk about the pictures, name objects and actions and ask questions.
- Talk about what you are doing as frequently as possible. Your child may not appear to be listening but is likely absorbing new information all the time. One day, they will come out with a word you didn't think they knew or understand a word you haven't specifically taught and that is such a great feeling!
- Create opportunities that will encourage your child to communicate:
 - Don't pre-empt their needs
 - Give them small items of what they want rather than all of it – this way they have to ask for more.
 - Allow enough time for your child to initiate communication or respond to a question.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

You may want to seek professional input from a speech pathologist if your child:

- Has very few single words
- Doesn't understand or follow simple instructions
- Doesn't understand names of common objects
- Does not use objects to play
- Does not respond to simple questions
- Uses a limited number of new words

HOW WE CAN HELP

If you find these strategies are not helping your child progress, you may want to contact a speech pathologist. At Chatterbox Speech Pathology, based in Stirling, we can provide lots of practical strategies to help support language development. Our assessments provide insightful information about the things your little one is great at and areas that we can support. We make therapy fun for the child and give parents realistic goals to consolidate at home with practical ideas on how to develop the goals. We provide parent coaching to increase your ability to support your child.



If you would like any further information, please feel free to contact Kunali on 0405 176 931 or email me: info@chatterboxwa.com.au.

I hope you have found some useful information in this post. Please feel free to share this with any friends and family who may get some worthwhile information from the post too. Next week, we will discuss what to do for your three year old. Have a great week!

