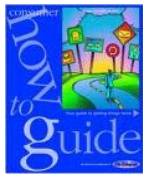


## 12.- How your toddlers build vocabulary



# Talking toddlers

One thing about most two-year-olds: You can't get them to shut up. Your toddler is constantly talking, talking, talking. Your children want you to understand their experience, just as they themselves are beginning to make sense of it. So they are constantly trying to communicate with you.

Your toddlers' language skills expand dramatically in this third year. On your children's second birthday, they probably spoke around 200 to 300 words. By their third birthday, your toddlers' vocabulary will jump to well over a thousand different words! What's more, vocabulary becomes a focus for your toddlers' curiosity. Your two-year-olds want to be able to say more and understand more—and to do that, they need to learn more words.



### Childproofing

Early or precocious use of language is not necessarily a sign of children's superior intellect. Likewise, comparatively slow mastery of language skills does not necessarily indicate inferior intellect. Remember that Albert Einstein didn't speak until very late in his toddlerhood.

Early in the third year, your children will employ language as one of her play materials. They'll use it just the same way they pound and pound on play dough: to come up with different shapes and see what they can make. Your children love chanting, singing, and speaking the same words (or even just sounds) over and over again in a sing-song way.

Around their second birthday, your children may begin to put together two or three words to communicate a simple idea. At first, they'll sound like an old *Correo Argentino* operator sending a telegram: "Dada, ball (STOP). Sara play (STOP)." But soon, your children will put together three-, four-, and even five-word sentences.

These sentences become increasingly complex throughout the year and may even begin to contain more than one idea. By their third birthday, your toddlers may be telling you "stories"—perhaps narrating their life story to you.

### How You Can Help Your Chatterbox



The best way to help your children's language skills is, of course, to continue to talk to them—and listen to them. They can communicate ideas and experiences to you now, so you can have real conversations with them. But don't bother correcting your children's word choices or sentence structure.