

## Using Words and Sentences

Children start to use babbled sounds before moving on to using single words and then joining words together into short phrases and then sentences.

Being able to use words and sentences lets children express their wants and needs and to share their thoughts and feelings.

Age	Minimum Expectations for Child
<b>2</b>	Uses 10-20 single words. Uses lots of jargon/nonsense speech.
<b>2 ½</b>	Uses 50 words, including action words e.g. run, jump. Uses 2 words together, e.g. 'daddy car'.
<b>3-4 years</b>	Uses 3-4 word sentences. Uses 'small' words like 'the' and 'is'.
<b>4-5 years</b>	Can hold a simple conversation. Using 4000-5000 words. Joins sentences with 'and' and 'because'.
<b>6 years</b>	Uses long sentences with correct grammar. Retells a story or event.
<b>9 years</b>	Expresses ideas clearly and logically. Rapidly learning and using lots of new word.
<b>11 years</b>	Can use sarcasm and idiomatic language e.g. 'the teacher exploded' to mean 'the teacher was angry'. Can initiate and share ideas and opinions clearly.

## Here are 5 'top tips' to help – First words

**Note** Children learn best from real experiences and interaction with others. Make sure you give your child lots of chances to play and talk without screens switched on e.g. TV, Phones, and tablets

1	The best way for your child to develop language is through play – make time each day to play with your child.
2	When playing with your child, keep your own language simple. This will be much easier for them to copy. Name the items your child is looking at or interested in e.g. when looking at a plane in the sky – say “plane!” or “look, plane!”
3	Offer choices and wait for your child to respond e.g. “want water or milk?” Accept all responses (such as pointing and gesture) and repeat the word for your child to listen to.
4	Try not to ask too many questions as this does not help your child to learn more words. It is more helpful if you make comments and name things for your child e.g. instead of saying “What’s that?” you might say “Look, there’s a <b>duck</b> ”.
5	Keep sentences short – ideally 1 or 2 words. It is easier for your child to learn a new word when the word is not in a sentence.

## Here are 5 top tips to help – Putting words together

1	Model lots of language for your child to hear. Talk about things that your child is seeing, hearing and doing.
2	Once your child is using lots of naming words (e.g. car, ball, tree), you can help them to use more action words e.g. say what the child is doing with toys – teddy sleeping, dolly crying. This helps your child start to make their first sentences.
3	Repeat any words your child says and add a word or two of your own so they can hear how to make the sentence longer.
4	Repeat what your child says in the correct way so they hear how to use words in sentences e.g. “daddy car” > “Daddy driving the car”.
5	Use the same phrases over and over again with everyday situations e.g. “Hello teddy”, “More juice”, “Open the door”.

