



Communicating Kids – 1 to 2 Years

Social Communication

Children of this age will probably be using facial expressions to communicate how they feel and use eye contact and looking as a way of interacting. They should start to show more interest in sharing in activities like a toy, a book or a physical game, with another person for short periods of time. They will be using increasing gestures like reaching, pointing and passing things to let adults know what they want, or 'tell them' something.

Language

Understanding – Children of this age will be developing understanding of words about;

- everyday routines – eg bath time, going to the shops etc.
- everyday people and object names- eg shoes.

They should become able to follow simple instructions- eg lie down for nappy change.

Expressing themselves

From 1- 2 years old you should see the words your child says grow until they have around 50 words by the time they are 2. These words are likely to be things in their everyday life- people, pets, toys, food and drink, as well as animals, parts of the body (like eyes and nose) and transport. They are likely to start using short phrases and putting 2 words together around the time they are 2.

Speech

At 1 year old children will still be trying out using early sounds and lots of their 'talking' will be babble. This gradually reduces across the year, with the emergence of more words, but unfamiliar people may still struggle to understand what children of this age are saying. It would be expected that children become more understandable as they approach 2 years old, however they are still likely to have lots of words that they can't quite say right.



What can adults do?

- *Model real words*– it can be tempting to use 'baby words' with children of this age, or copy the way they say things, but it's a good idea to model the real word to them from the start.
- *Repeat words lots*– children need to hear a word a huge number of times to learn it- especially in the early stages of learning words.
- *Use gestures* (actions and signs)- gestures often come before words, supporting your words with an action gives your child a stronger message which helps understanding and gives them the chance to use an action to let you know they want something before they can say the word for it.

Make communication meaningful

- *Focus on words not sounds*– children at this age are likely to have lots of words they can't quite say right (that's normal), letting them know you have understood them is the important thing. (it is helpful to repeat back the correct version of the word but don't expect them to be able to repeat it correctly just yet).
- *Focus on words that are important and helpful* – it is more useful to be able to ask for a drink or a favourite toy than be able to name colours.
- Remember they are listening even if they aren't talking, so think about the words you are using and what you want your child to be learning.

Try this- Give choices using objects.

"do you want breadstick or cracker?" (showing each option as you say it)

Children at this age often know what they want and can use a gesture (like reaching or pointing) but might not have the words to be able to say what they want.

By showing them 2 options and giving them a choice it gives them a chance to use the skills they have to let you know what they want (it also means adults are modelling words clearly in meaningful situations).

Disclaimer

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