

Tips for Talking: children aged 12-18 months

At this stage, children will be starting to use language. They will also become more sociable towards others.

Children will develop language skills at different rates, but at this stage typically children will be:

- Enjoying games like 'peek-a-boo', 'pat-a-cake' and 'clap hands', and toys that make a noise.
- Using a few simple words (e.g. cup, daddy, dog) although these may not always be easily recognised by unfamiliar adults.



- Starting to understand a few simple words, for example, drink, shoe, car, and simple instructions like 'kiss mummy', 'kick ball' and 'give me'.
- Using gestures or pointing often with words or sounds to show what they want.

Here are some simple ideas to encourage children's language development at this stage:

- Singing nursery rhymes (those with actions like 'in-cey-wincey-spider' are especially good) and playing games like 'pat-a-cake' and 'peek-a-boo'. These connect language to actions and help your child's understanding and memory. Playing games involving 'more' or 'again' can help develop attention and support language too.
- Use toys and objects that make a noise, as well as noisy books and tapes to encourage children's attention and listening skills.
- Talk to your child about what you are doing (e.g. 'Mummy is putting shoes on'). Any opportunity to speak to your child about something that they can see will help them to connect words to the world around them.
- If your child is pointing at something, tell them what it is! If they try to say the word, say it back to them. This will reinforce their understanding of words.
- Name the objects your child sees – this could be their toys or things like clothes, parts of their body or household objects. The more a child hears a word, the quicker they will remember it.

If you have concerns about your child's speech or language at this stage, let your Health Visitor know. She can make an appointment with a Speech and Language Therapist for you.

