

How do I know if my child is reaching the milestones?

The following checklists may help you determine if your child's communication skills are developing on schedule. If you are concerned at all, you are welcome to contact us for a chat or ask your child's Health Visitor.

12 to 17 months. My toddler:

	Yes	No
Attends to a book or toy for about two minutes	—	—

Follows simple instructions with gestures e.g. pointing and asking them to fetch something	—	—
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Answers simple questions in their own way - (nonverbally)	—	—
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Points to objects, pictures and and family members	—	—
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Says two or three words	—	—
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Tries to imitate other, simple words	—	—
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18 to 23 months. My toddler: enjoys being read to	—	—
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Follows simple commands without gestures	—	—
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Points to body parts e.g. nose	—	—
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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call 01432 363975

Talking with your baby (1 to 2 years)



First words (one to two years)

Now your child will begin to use their first words.

They will understand many more words than they use, so that by the time they can say around 20 words they will actually understand about 100.

They are able to point to objects or pictures in simple picture books.

As well as using lots of strings of babble, (jargon), the odd real word will start to creep in.

They will often repeat words that you say or echo the ends of your sentences. This is the time to be very careful about what you say when they are around!

How to encourage your baby

This is the stage when children begin to get very interested in books - a brilliant way to learn new words. Choose picture books with clear pictures or photographs of everyday objects. Complicated pictures are too confusing for your baby as s/he is still learning what it is important to pay attention to at any one time. You could always have a go at making some picture or photo books of your own, e.g. with individual photos of all your family.

Never force your child to speak, e.g. "say car, for mummy, say car", or keep asking for a response from them when one is not offered because communicating needs to be fun, not hard work!

Try to give them choices, e.g. "Do you want an apple or a banana?" and try not to anticipate their every need otherwise they will have no need to learn to speak!

Accept whatever word they use for something, giving them lots of praise. Don't worry if the sounds are wrong or they use baby words e.g. "moo" for cow. Remember you yourself use the adult words back for your child to hear, perhaps stretching them in to a short sentence, e.g. "Yes, the cow's eating".

Games to play

- 1) Play fetching games. Scatter some of their toys around the room and ask them to fetch them, e.g. "Bring me the ball" ... A very useful way to tidy up!
- 2) Make your own scrapbook with pictures they choose, family photos etc.
- 3) Play picture lotto games.
- 4) Sing nursery rhymes but leave off the last word of each sentence to encourage them to say it.
- 5) Use action songs or rhymes with choices for your child to tell you what to do next, e.g. 'Old MacDonald had a farm'.
- 6) Play sorting games, e.g. put all the cars in one box and all the bricks in another.