

Your 3-year old takes off with language!

At age three, children can use words to express themselves fully. They are able to have a mini conversation with you and retell an event or story. They are excellent communicators and usually speak clearly enough to be understood 75% of the time.

Expressive Language

- Uses sentences with 3-4 words.
- Asks questions using who, what, where and constantly asking why?!
- Develops some grammar words such as pronouns (I instead of me).
- Has a short conversation with you.
- Talks about the recent past and can retell a short story.

Speech Sounds and Clarity

- Speaks clearly and is understood by parents most of the time.
- Uses consonants at the beginning and ends of words.
- Uses sounds p, b, w, h, y, t, d, k, g. Starting to use f, s, and z sounds (may be at the ends or beginnings of words).

Receptive Language

- Understands longer directions with 2 or 3 steps.
- Understands concepts such as just one, all, under, behind, most.
- Understands questions what? where? who?

Social Communication and Play

- Plays with children their age, taking turns and beginning to be able to share.
- Enjoys dressing up and pretending.
- Can relate to others' experience, e.g., help another child who is hurt

Scan the QR code below for free help from a speech therapist at your local health center if you have any concerns or notice any of the following:

- Not responding to your requests and directions.
- Not using words to communicate.
- Not combining words into sentences.
- Not playing with other children their age.
- It's hard to understand their speech, you hear only a few consonants.
- Frustration and tantrums seem more frequent or intense than expected at this age.



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You are your child's best teacher. Try to make time everyday to talk, play, read and sing with your child. Engage your child in everyday chores. Your child will learn best from interaction with you rather than playing on a device or watching TV.

Tips and Strategies

When playing...

- Join in with them but let them lead. You can get your own toys (match their play) and copy what they're doing.
- Be face to face and at their level.
- Try to make comments rather than ask too many questions. Example: "That tower is so tall!" Rather than "Is your tower tall?" or "what are you building?"
- Remember: questions test, but comments teach!



When reading...

- Make time for book sharing every day. Turn off screens and devices as much as possible, especially in the evening before bedtime.
- Talk about the pictures in the book rather than reading all the words. Let your child tell you about the pictures in their own words.

When talking...

- Repeat what your child says, using correct words or sounds. You don't need to make your child say it "properly." Just emphasize the parts you want to teach them.
- Add new words as you respond to your child – teach them new vocabulary. Example: "Mm, this cookie is delicious! That means yummy."
- Ask questions that keep the conversation going rather than ones that need a simple yes/no answer. Example: instead of "Would you like some blueberries?" ask "What would you like?" You could give some choices, if you need to make it easier: "Would you like blueberries or crackers?"

When singing...

- Let your child lead the song. Before starting the next verse, pause and let them choose what comes next.
- Keep using songs with actions. Actions cue a child for the words to use.
- Sing without recorded music.



If you have questions or concerns about your child's communication development, **contact your local health center** to see a Speech-Language Pathologist at no cost!



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