

# 2-3 Communication and Language

## Parent Guide

Welcome to Twinkl Tots. This parent guide focuses on an overview of how a child is typically developing between the ages of two and three. It looks at some of the communication and language skills you might expect to see from your toddler at this age and ideas on how you can support your child to meet their milestones at home.

Like with everything you come across while exploring our Twinkl Tots course, please remember that all children are different and develop at their own pace. Your child might show the development of these skills at different times or in different ways. However, we will look at milestones that are fairly typical for this particular age group.

### What do they mean by communication and language?

Communication refers to the back and forth interactions that you have with your child and these interactions form the foundations of language and cognitive development. The development of your child's language supports all areas of learning and development.

Towards their second birthday, children can be using up to 50 words and will start to put two or three words together, whereas towards their third birthday, this can increase to around 300 and include words that are much more descriptive. For example, they will start to use words that describe time (such as now or later), ones that describe space (such as here or over there) and function (for example they can tell you that a sponge is for washing and a fork is for eating).

Around the age of two, children will understand more than they can say. They might understand between 200 and 500 words but only be able to use around 50 to communicate. From around two children can understand simple questions and instructions. Examples of this would be "Where is teddy?" or "What is the boy in the picture doing?". Around the age of three, children can show that they understand action words by pointing at the right picture in a book, for example if you ask, "Who is jumping?".



# Ways to Support Your Child's Communication and Language Development

## Develop a Language Rich Environment

Supporting your child's communication and language at this stage is about developing a language rich environment. As well as the fun and interactive activities that we have outlined for you as part of the Twinkl Tots course, here are a few things you can do at home too.

Firstly, think about the number and quality of the conversations that you have with your child. How can you incorporate more language into their day? What different things do you do that could encourage interaction and communication and how can you maximise these?

Commenting on what you or they are doing is a great way of developing conversation and incorporating more language into their day. Talking about what you are doing when you are driving the car, making dinner, building a tower or doing household chores provides extra opportunities for your child to hear everyday language. It might feel a bit strange at first but providing commentary on what you are doing will support your child to learn new vocabulary.

For example, let's take a look at something that could be a silent task such as putting on a load of laundry. That is something that doesn't necessarily require a long conversation but, by involving your child and talking it through, it turns into an opportunity for developing language.

An example of this interaction might go like this :

"Mummy is putting this washing in the machine. Can you help me?"

"Why do I need to put these clothes in here? That's right. They are dirty. They need to get washed."

"Gosh, there is a lot of laundry here. I wonder if we will get it all into the machine. Whose top is this?"

"We are going to put on a light wash today. What clothes need washing?"

"I can see daddy's socks. They might be stinky. Do you have stinky socks? Where do you wear your socks?"



# Ways to Support Your Child's Communication and Language Development

I can use about ten words with clear meanings but not always pronounced correctly (e.g. 'ojo' for orange or 'wawa' for water).

I can begin to use words I hear independently.

I can use some single words (like 'dada').

I can begin to copy two word phrases I hear people say regularly, like 'All gone!'.

## Milestones This Supports:



## Give Them Tasks

In the above example, you would be modelling lots of possibly new words, including descriptions (dirty, light, stinky). You are modelling your thoughts (I wonder if...) and asking different types of questions (why, what, where), which build on your child's current knowledge. By modelling different ways of speaking, you are teaching your child many concepts and words. You can also repeat words back to them, showing you've understood them and giving them reinforcement. You will probably get so used to it, you won't realise.

I can use about ten words with clear meanings but not always pronounced correctly (e.g. 'ojo' for orange or 'wawa' for water).

I can answer questions that begin with who, what, when, where and why.

## Milestones This Supports:



# Ways to Support Your Child's Communication and Language Development

## Give Them Tasks

Many toddlers love to help! By asking them to put bits of shopping away, tidy up toys or give something to their sibling, you are getting much more than just a bit of extra help (although that is lovely!). You are helping them learn to follow instructions, including ones with verbs (action words) and practise prepositions and directions. And don't forget social conventions such as manners! 'Please can you put your shoes on top of the bench and hang your coat up over there?' - so much learning in one sentence! If your toddler is more reluctant to follow instructions, try making them a challenge instead, e.g. 'Can you put this book back on the shelf before I count to 10?'. Making it playful can be a great motivator for children.

### Milestones This Supports:

I can follow two-step directions, like 'Please go to the table and bring me the cup'.

I can use prepositions, such as in, on, off, down and up.

I can understand directions such as under, in, on, in front of and behind.

I can follow simple instructions that involve action words (verbs).

### Play

Speaking of being playful, play is one of the most important things you can do with your child to support their overall development, not just their communication and language skills. Frequent and imaginative play increases the opportunity for questions, conversation and narrating of what is happening. This encourages children to talk and use more words.



# Ways to Support Your Child's Communication and Language Development

I can use the present tense (crying), some plurals (socks) and possessives (baby's bottle).



## Milestones This Supports:

I can use three to four-word sentences by around 36 months.



I can use two to three-word sentences at around 24 months.



I can use at least 50 words by my second birthday and about 300 by my third birthday.



I can engage in short conversations but I might change the topic abruptly sometimes!



I can recognise items as 'yours' and 'mine', as well as understand turn-taking - 'my turn' and 'your turn'.

## Read

Reading regularly with children exposes them to so many different parts of communication and language, for example learning to look at people's expressions in the illustrations helps them begin to understand facial expressions and body language - and that is before we look at the words of the book! You can give your child a chance to hear so many more words than they might come across in daily conversation through reading books, whether they are fact or fiction. Plus, if you model changing your voice to fit the characters (a loud voice for Daddy Bear and a quiet voice for Baby Bear for example), your child will begin to hear the differences and may start to practise this themselves in their play.

You should find that as your child gets older, they are able to listen to stories for longer periods of time and you might find that stories last even longer because they are starting to show more interest in the pictures - 'What's that?' is a common refrain at this stage! You can ask your child questions such as, 'Who's jumping?' and what characters in the story are doing as you read together.



# Ways to Support Your Child's Communication and Language Development

I can recognise verbs in pictures, pointing to the correct picture when asked, 'Who's jumping?' for example.



I can ask questions, such as 'Where is..?' and 'What are they doing?'.



I can listen to books and stories for longer periods of time.



I can play and experiment with my voice by whispering or shouting on purpose.



I can point to objects and pictures I find interesting when listening to or looking at a book.



## Be Patient!



The most important thing that you can do for your child at this stage is to be patient. Children at this age will not have their communication nailed. They may become frustrated as they try to communicate - this might mean some tantrums! Giving them time to express themselves in a way that they are comfortable will increase their confidence and encourage their development.

For a more detailed look at the communication and language milestones you might expect at this age, and more ideas for simple activities to do at home, take a look at the rest of our play-based Twinkl Tots course, which is designed specifically to support you, and your little one, at home.

**Disclaimer:** Welcome to Twinkl Tots. We hope you find the information on our course and resources useful. This course is provided for informational and educational purposes only. As all children are different and develop at their own pace, your child might show development at different times or in different ways. Our aim is simply to give you general guidance and the information may not apply to your specific situation. If you have any concerns about your child's development, please speak to your health visitor or GP.

## Milestones This Supports:

I can sometimes tell you how I'm feeling.

