

First Word Users: 12-18 months

Social Interaction

- Copies simple actions during pretend play e.g. pretends to have a drink.
- Likes to play with adults as well as on own.
- Enjoys looking at simple, short picture books together with an adult.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Talk about what your child is doing in everyday activities and in play e.g. "you're drinking juice!"

WHAT NEXT?:

Talk more about the books you look at together - follow your child's lead and describe the pictures on the page.

Talking/Expressive Language

- Babbles to self during play.
- Copies one word from a sentence said to them.
- Has 10-50 single words in their vocabulary.
- Tries to sing familiar nursery rhymes.
- Words often used too broadly ie 'duck' for all birds (over generalisation)

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Repeat words lots and lots of times during routines - this helps your child to anticipate the words and join in e.g. "ready, steady... GO!"

WHAT NEXT?:

Singing nursery rhymes or songs is a great way to have fun with your baby, and it teaches them the rhythm of talking.

Play and Social Development

- Uses real objects appropriately.
- Plays alone/with adult.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Follow their lead! Talk about what your child is looking at/is interested in.

WHAT NEXT?:

Use more comments than questions as these put less pressure on your child and lead to more talking.

Listening and Understanding

- Child makes eye contact when they hear their name.
- Concentrates on a toy for more than a few seconds.
- Points to familiar people or things when asked "where's..."
- Understands simple instructions with one main part e.g. "get your shoes".
- May appear to not listen and be stubborn.
- Will concentrate on one thing at a time. This is called single channelled attention.
- Starts to understand body parts

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Wherever possible, show your child the things you're talking about so that they can understand e.g. at changing time, show them a nappy.

WHAT NEXT?:

Ask where objects are in books to encourage your child to point at them e.g. "let's find the lion, roar!"

Speech Sounds

- Spoken words can be unclear.
- Some sounds missed out and replaced by others.
- Child's words may only be understood by familiar adults.
- Will say consonant sounds m p b t w d and vowels

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Model back the correct pronunciation if your child says something incorrectly e.g. "yes it's the sssssun!"

WHAT NEXT?:

Make lots of sounds as you play together e.g. if you are playing cooking, make the frying pan say "sss" as it cooks.



Want some more ideas and activities to support your child's communication? Take a look at our resources on Halton's Communication Hub

