

How Many Words for a 2-Year-Old?

Expectations

What counts?

- About 50 words
- Combines 2-3 words into phrases (e.g., "more juice")
- Word approximations (e.g., 'cib' for 'crib')
- Animal sounds (e.g., 'moo' for cow)
- Child signing (e.g., uses the sign for more instead of saying it)

When to Take Action

Red Flags

- Vocabulary under 50 words
- No new words being added
- Not combining words (e.g., "want ball")
- Limited gestures (e.g., not pointing or waving)
- Speech is unclear, even to familiar listeners (family/friends)
- Loss of words or skills they previously had

Ways to Encourage More Words

- Follow your child's lead
- Model simple words during play
- Repeat and expand what they say
- Offer choices
- Pause and wait
- Use everyday routines
- Read simple books together
- Avoid pressuring your child to "say it"



How can a Speech-Language Pathologist Help?

You do not need to wait until age 3 if you are concerned. A speech and language evaluation can help answer questions about your child's development. An evaluation does not automatically mean your child will need therapy. Sometimes parents leave an evaluation feeling reassured that their child is progressing appropriately. They can evaluate the following:

- Expressive language (what your child says)
- Receptive language (what your child understands)
- Play skills
- Social Communication
- Early speech development

