



Saying More and More Words

At this stage...

I am learning to say about ten to twenty different words. My new words will probably be words that I understand, words I hear often, and words that are meaningful or important to me. So for example, I may be able to imitate a new word I hear you say, but I probably won't say it again unless that word is directly important and meaningful to me.

Typical first words often include family member and pet names; labels for familiar objects such as "ball," "bottle," "juice"; action words such as "go," "look"; greetings such as "Hi" and "bye"; a few modifiers such as "hot" "dirty," "more" or "mine," and familiar body parts such as "eyes" or "nose."

Since I cannot talk in sentences I will use single words to communicate a complete thought. For example, when I say, "Cup," I may mean, "I want my cup," "Give me more juice," "That's my cup," or "Take my cup." The context of the situation, my gestures, and voice tone can help you figure out what my complete sentence might be.

Ideas to HELP:

1. When you are encouraging me to say new words, concentrate on two or three familiar words whose initial sounds are sounds I can already say, e.g., if I can say, "da" encourage me to imitate you when you say "dog," "doll," "down"; if I can say "ba," encourage me to imitate you when you say "ball," "bottle," "bath," "book."



Emphasize these words repetitively during the day whenever the opportunity arises.

2. I will need much practice imitating new words before I can say them spontaneously in a meaningful way. Continue to name familiar objects, actions, foods, etc. during the day, and give me a chance to imitate you.
3. Encourage me to imitate or name pictures when we're looking at books together. Use books that have realistic pictures with only one or two familiar objects to a page.
4. Like most children at this stage, I won't be able to say many of my words clearly or correctly. Don't imitate my mispronunciations because I need to hear the correct way to say them. Instead, if I say a word incorrectly, repeat it back to me correctly in a short phrase. For example, if I say "ah" when I want up, you could say, "Up! You want up!"
5. Expand my single words into a short phrase for me according to my apparent intent, e.g., if I say "more," as I hand you my cup you could respond, "More milk? Okay!"
6. Talk out loud sometimes during everyday routines as if you are talking to yourself, e.g., "I'm setting the table. First, I'll put down the plates. I wonder where I put the napkins. Oh, here they are!" You can talk about what you are doing, what you are looking at, what I am playing with, and so on. When you talk to yourself it helps me attach words to the activities and objects I see, e.g., "I'm filling the pitcher with water...I'm watering the plant...oops, some water dripped on the floor!"
7. Talk about the things I am doing, looking at, playing with, or eating during everyday routines.

2.45 Uses ten-fifteen words spontaneously (15-17.5)

2.50 Uses expressive vocabulary of fifteen-twenty words (17.5-20.5)

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