

Your child's first words...

Children usually say their first words **between 12-18 months**.

It's a very important milestone for both you and your child!

How do they do it? Your child has heard a word lots of times in lots of different situations, and matched that sequence of speech sounds to its' meaning.

Babbling has helped them practise different sounds, and they can now start to try out the words they've learnt to communicate something to you.

What are common first words?

Often first words are the names of familiar people or animals. Soon after this, they may learn words for food/drink, body parts, clothes, toys, household objects, actions, as well as social words like 'hello' and describing words like 'up' and 'more'.

mama
cat baby
no
daddy

Don't forget...

Action words (e.g. walk, brush, eat, sleep, sit). These are very important for making sentences. Make sure you label the everyday actions you and your child are doing.

How can I help?

- Follow your child's interests - label the things that your child points to, does or looks at. This helps them match the word to what they are seeing or doing.
- Get on the floor and play face to face so your child can see your lip patterns as you speak.
- When you think you've heard your child say a word, repeat it. This shows your child that you are listening.
- Remember that sound effects count as words and are often easier for children to say - use animal and vehicle noises when you're playing, singing and looking at books.
- Use gestures that match the words you say. This helps your child learn what the word means.

By **2 years**, children can usually say about **50 different words**.

If you are concerned, contact your Health Visitor or Children's Centre for advice.