

FAQ: My 15 month old child isn't saying many words



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My 15 month old child isn't saying many words. Should I be worried?

It's great that you're so vigilant regarding your child's communication skills. At 15 months, we would expect children to be babbling. Whilst many children start to say their first words around their first birthday, it can take as long as 18 months before they appear. So, it's a good idea to keep an eye on this to make sure it happens.

What can I do to help?

At this point we would suggest trying some supportive strategies and resources and keeping an eye on your child using typical development milestones. The Talking Point [website](#) is a great resource full of information about how and when typical language skills develop so it's worth taking a look on here.

In terms of supportive strategies, these are some things that we know are helpful in supporting early language skills:

- Follow your child's lead when communicating with them. This might take some pressure off them to speak, particularly if they are finding it hard.
- Try not to ask them to repeat back words to you as they may not be ready to do so. Rather provide a good model, keeping your language simple and pause to see if they will copy you.
- Make the most of everyday routines for language development. Talk about what you are doing during activities like breakfast time, bath time and make these fun, language filled times.
- Give good, simple, language models and if they start to say words extend the things that they say by adding an extra word, so if they say 'car' you add 'yes, big car'.

I CAN Help enquiry service www.ican.org.uk/help

Call 020 7843 2544 to speak to one of our speech and language therapists.

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Visit this website for information about children's communication.



- Help them to learn words by giving them choices. Offer 2 things to choose from whilst giving them the word, for example “do you want milk, or juice?” as you hold them up in front of them. Questions like these are better than ones that only require a yes/no response, like “do you want juice?”
- Help develop their listening skills, as these are really important for children when they are learning to talk. So, play lots of games that mean that they have to listen like “ready steady go” games (for example blowing bubbles, listening for the word ‘go’ before pushing the noisy toy or knocking over the tower of bricks) and go on listening walks around the house or your local area.

You can find more tips and ideas on I CAN's [factsheet](#). You can also find games and activities to try in I CAN's [Toddler Talk](#) pack. You can download a sample of these [here](#).

We would recommend that you try these strategies and resources for another three months or so and see how your child gets on. Then, if you're still concerned, don't hesitate to speak to one of our speech and language therapists by calling the I CAN Help Enquiry Service on 0207 843 2544

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