

**Every 2-Year-Old Should Know at Least These 25 Words:**  
**A Checklist for Toddler Language Development**

Mommy (Mama)	yes (si)	banana (platano)	hat (sombrero)
Daddy (Papa)	no (no)	cookie (galleta)	book (libro)
baby (bebe)	dog (perro)	car (carro)	more (mas)
milk (leche)	cat (gato)	hot (caliente)	all gone (se acabo)
juice (jugo)	ball (pelota)	Thank you (gracias)	
hello (hola)	nose (nariz)	bath (baño)	
bye-bye (adios)	eye (ojo)	shoe (zapato)	

Turns out chatty toddlers who say "All gone" and "Bye-bye" aren't just cute – they're showing off their essential language skills. Researchers have identified 25 "must have" words that every child should be saying when they turn 2. Kids who haven't mastered them might not just be late talkers – they could be showing signs of autism, developmental delays or hearing problems. The 25 words – including Mommy, Daddy, baby, hot and hat – were the most commonly said of a list of 310 words that kids master when they first start to speak.

Parents who are worried that their kids aren't chatty enough should consider turning off the TV. A growing body of research also found that kids develop language more quickly if they are engaged in conversation instead of parked in front of kids' programs.

Professor Nan Bernstein Ratner, who moderated the panel at the American Association for the Advancement on Science where the findings were presented, said the 25 words are like the "canary in the coal mine." She said, "When a child doesn't have enough words at the age of 2, that is not only a problem in its own right, but it's a signal of a variety of other problems."

The 25 words are just the baseline for toddler talkers. There is a wide range of language abilities in toddlers, and 2-year-olds' normal range is from 75-225 words. Children who are late talkers usually have an average vocabulary of 25 words.

Leslie Rescorla, director of the Child Study Institute at Bryn Mawr College who developed the checklist, said most kids have many more. "The bottom line is this: Children should have 50 words by the time they are 2 and they should begin to combine words into phrases," Rescorla said. "If they are not doing that, it's worth evaluating them because they might have a problem you can start helping them with early." Rescorla says most late-talking toddlers catch up. But their skills are likely to lag behind those of kids from the same background who were chattier at 2.

There's good news for bilingual families – their 2-year-olds are expected to have 25 words in only one of their languages. Upper West Side bilingual baby Violette Tarantino-Marie began to have a blizzard of words at 19 months. She initially spoke what friends called "Fringlish" when she was 19 months, but could rattle off more than 100 words in English at 2. She was a little less verbal in French. Now, at 3, she's speaking up a storm in both languages. "We talk all day," said her mom, Carla.