

# LANGUAGE PREVENTION AGE 0-3 YEARS



Your child learns how to speak from you, the parents, and other people around them. This booklet will provide you with guidance for your child until age 3. The national federation of FNO provides you with guidance and answers related to language, oral skills and activities.



# THE FIRST THREE MONTHS

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## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

From the very first days, babies react to their parents' voices which they've already heard during pregnancy. They also react to noise. They learn to stare at and recognise their parents' faces.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

From birth, babies vocalise – **cooing & making sounds with their mouths** – when lying down. They also express themselves using their bodies, by gesticulating, demonstrating varying energy levels and posture.

From 6 weeks onwards, the baby **smiles**.



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## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

During this period between 0 and 4-6 months, the newborn spontaneously seeks out a pacifier or breast; this is known as the rooting reflex. Nutritive (breast milk or formula) and non-nutritive (teat, finger, tongue) suckling begins at the same time. The newborn perceives smells and tastes. This is the primary oral feeding stage: suckling, swallowing, and breathing.

## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

The relationship with the newborn baby is very much about the body: carrying, rocking, caressing, tickling, while seeking eye contact. You can put their emotions into words as well as your own, and explain what is going on around them. This is called “language exposure”. Babies are sensitive to a gentle, melodic voice.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your baby doesn't seem to react to noise,
- > doesn't look at you when you talk to him or her,
- > has difficulty suckling; barely eats.



# 3 MONTHS OLD ALREADY, SOON TO BE 6

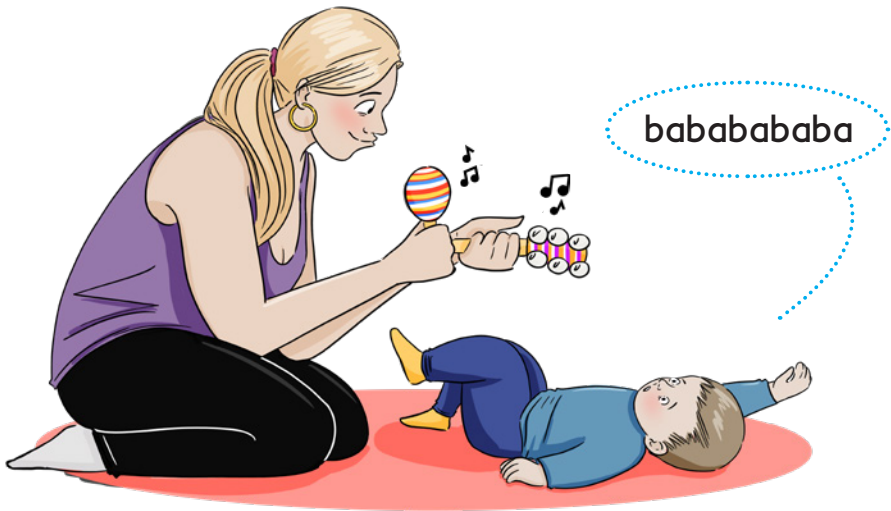


## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

Babies become more comfortable with their body; they move a lot more. Their movements are more precise: can grab toys and shake them. They put them in their **mouth a lot** to explore them. They follow with their eyes, distinguish colours and recognise the faces of their loved ones. They may respond with smiles. They react to their name.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

The baby will produce increasingly varied sounds: first vowels (“aaaaa”) and then syllables – known as **babbling** (“bababa”). He or she responds to your words, almost like real dialogue. The baby laughs out loud.



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## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

The child discovers new tastes and textures. Bottle and/or breast feeding and spoon feeding occur together. This is the secondary oral feeding stage.

## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

Babies particularly enjoy sound-emitting toys and interactive games. They like tickles, mouth noises and imitations. You can comment on what they are experiencing, describe their surroundings, what they see and hear, and sing songs to them. You can give your baby books made out of fabric, soft balls, rattles, and lay them on a mat so that they can move more freely than they would in a pram or bouncer.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your baby doesn't look at you when you talk to him or her,
- > doesn't smile,
- > babbling ranges from little to none at all,
- > has difficulty suckling and barely eats.



# BETWEEN 7 AND 10 MONTHS



## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

They can sit up and thus grasp objects better. They can **explore space by moving around**. They will begin to stand upright with support and will have an elevated view of the world around them. They recognise objects, people and sounds in their daily life. They follow with their eyes and turn towards the source of a sound. They begin to know how to imitate the gestures you show and which they like “goodbye” or “very good”. They understand “yes” and react to “no”. They hand you an object on request. They recognise their names.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

Babbling will become richer; your child will produce **more varied syllables**. The infant engages in real dialogue with the adult, respecting pauses and intonations. The baby infant various emotions more clearly. The baby attracts attention by shouting.



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## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

They begin to eat mashed foods and, at around 8 months, will discover soft morsels of food (well-cooked vegetables, ripe fruit). They will be able to bring the food to their mouth with their hands. This is also when the first teeth appear. At mealtimes, they begin to want to hold the spoon on their own.

## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

You can play “peek-a-boo”, say “very good” to congratulate and encourage them, sing and/or mime rhymes, comment on what they are doing, name the people and objects around them. You can play with hiding objects as they enjoy looking for them. You can give them little books with pictures, touch-based books and books made of fabric.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your baby is passive or seems indifferent to your prompting,
- > he or she doesn't look at you when you talk to them,
- > he or she doesn't babble,
- > he or she has difficulties with the spoon (refuses bits of food, selective eating), has repeated retching or vomiting, doesn't gain enough weight.



# TOWARDS 12 MONTHS



## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

The child is curious about the world around them; discovers walking, picks up objects between the thumb and index finger. The child increasingly imitates the people they live with.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

They become talkative. They speak with their own words or gestures instead. They say **a few words** that come up systematically, such as “again”, “sleepy”, “daddy”, “mummy”. They imitate conversations and reproduce intonations. They play telephone. They attract the attention of those around them and watch for reactions seeking approval or permission. In this way they experiment with the words “yes – no”. They understand more and more words (about 30 words) that are used in their daily routine and when you talk to them about common objects that are not present (bottle, cuddly toy, cookie, shoe, etc.).





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## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

From the age of 1 year onwards, they start to eat and drink from a cup on their own.

They eat small, tender pieces of food.

## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

You can talk to them using short sentences. They understand simple requests (“give me the spoon”, “take off your hat” etc.). You can look at and narrate books with pictures, audio books, sing or listen to nursery rhymes, play with balls, dolls, cars, etc.

You can also **play pretend together**: pretend to eat and drink, make phone calls, playing nurse/doctor??, etc. You can give them cubes, as they begin to be able to line them up and stack them.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your child doesn't retain what he or she has learned or doesn't make progress,
- > is passive or seems indifferent to your prompting,
- > he or she doesn't look at you when you talk to them, doesn't babble,
- > he or she doesn't point with his their finger,
- > he or she has difficulty sitting up or holding their head up,
- > he or she has difficulties with the spoon (refuses bits of food, selective eating), has repeated retching or vomiting, doesn't gain enough weight.



# BETWEEN 16 AND 19 MONTHS

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## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

Your child moves around rooms, moves objects around, plays. At times they may do their own thing and at other times they may ask you to join them for an activity or to help them. They understand more and more words and can even name objects and body parts.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

They begin to use words (from about 7 to 20) to talk about what they are experiencing and feeling. They “discuss”. Little by little, they will **associate two words** (such as “mummy gone”, “doll fall”, “truck break”), say ready-made expressions (“did it”, “no want”). They can also gesticulate, make requests and **point**. Language becomes richer with a real surge of vocabulary that will continue until the age of 2-3 years. They will start to **repeat** more and more.



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## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

The diet is varied. They know how to hold a spoon and eat pieces of food. They drink from a cup.

## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

You can tell and explain more and more things to your child; this gives your child **language models**. You can use your child's words and phrases to rephrase what they are saying: "Dog woo woo", "Yes, you're right, the dog is barking, he's going "woof, woof". You can watch and narrate short stories, sing or listen to rhymes.

You can suggest playing tea parties, or playing with small cars, miniature animal and character toys, building blocks. You can associate feelings and emotions with the characters in the games: e.g. happy, angry, sad, hungry or sleepy.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your baby doesn't look at you when you talk to him or her,
- > he or she doesn't smile,
- > he or she doesn't use social formalities (hello, goodbye, very good),
- > he or she doesn't point with finger,
- > he or she has difficulties with the spoon (refuses bits of food, selective eating), has repeated retching or vomiting, doesn't gain enough weight.



# TOWARDS 2 YEARS

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## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

Symbolic play emerges. These are **games that imitate** adult behaviour: looking after a baby/playing with a baby, cooking/tea party, going to the doctor's/playing doctor, and much more. The toddler can climb stairs, kick a ball, pull and drag objects. They understand increasingly complex sentences.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

They use about **50 vocabulary words**; can make sentences with 2-3 words. They ask questions and make requests.

They talk about themselves using their name. They know the names of routine objects (names of some clothes, food, toys). They can show different parts of their body on request. They start to contradict you saying "no".



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## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

They can eat on their own with their fingers or a spoon, and have a varied diet. They drink from a cup.

## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

You can talk more and more with your child: name objects, pictures, people, read books and talk about past or future activities. Bingo games or picture-matching games (Memory) can be suggested. The child can start to string large beads on a shoelace, can draw lines with a pencil, chalk, felt-tip pen and you can draw shapes and lines with them.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your child doesn't look at you when you talk to them,
- > he or she doesn't use any words or only uses a few to communicate,
- > neither uses their name nor "me",
- > doesn't retain what has been learned or doesn't make progress; doesn't imitate scenes from everyday life,
- > he or she doesn't point at objects with the finger,
- > he or she has difficulties eating with the spoon (refuses bits of food, selective eating), has repeated retching or vomiting, doesn't gain enough weight,
- > often has ear infections.



# TOWARDS 2 1/2 YEARS



## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

The child's personality is being formed. They test limits and can throw huge tantrums. They become more and more skilled at using their hands.

They start to draw their first figures (stick figures). They climb steps, kick balls and jump, among other things.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

This is the **ME** age! They start to be more precise and copy a lot of the sentences of those around them. They use verbs and adjectives. They tell stories when playing. They ask **questions** (where? who? why? when?). They can ask to have the same book read to them again and again. They understand more complex instructions. They know some colours, concepts such as one and several, family members, spatial terms (such as up/down, on/under and in/out).



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## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

They can eat on their own with their fingers or a spoon, and have a varied diet.

## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

Your child asks a lot of questions and you need patience to answer them! You can start to give them board games and educational games adapted to their age: bingo, puzzles, building blocks, etc. You can ask them to help you with routine daily tasks.

They follow you everywhere and copy your gestures and expressions.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your child doesn't look at you when you talk to him or her,
- > uses less than 50 words and unable to do word association;
- > doesn't imitate scenes from everyday life,
- > retches or vomits repeatedly, refuses pieces of food, selective with food, doesn't gain enough weight.



# AT 3 YEARS



## WHAT DOES THE CHILD DO?

Your child can ride a tricycle or a bike with stabilisers. They jump with both feet. They learn to be toilet trained during the day. They dress themselves, start to use scissors, hold a pencil to draw circles, crosses, etc. They make up stories, they use objects for purposes other than their intended purposes (a Lego for a telephone for example). They can count up to three.

## WHAT DOES THE CHILD SAY?

They use a vocabulary of about 400-900 words, and **their sentences become longer** and broader through the use of connecting words such as “and, for, in, with, who”. They use “I”. They become more and more intelligible; they can say almost all the sounds in the language. They talk to other children and make friends. They recite rhymes and imitate others. They understand questions such as “when?” and “why?” They listen to and understand short stories.



## HOW DOES THE CHILD EAT?

They can eat on their own with their fingers or a spoon, and have a varied diet. Now is the time to encourage them to stop using a pacifier, bottle or sucking their thumb.



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## HOW DO YOU TALK TO AND PLAY WITH THEM?

You can encourage them to be more and more autonomous (e.g. dressing up and grooming); listen to them without rushing them, while positioning yourself at their level; discuss past or future events with them so that they can understand the notion of time and explain what they are experiencing or observing so that they can put words to what surrounds them; offer them games such as bingo, memory games, tea party, construction games and puzzles. You can also suggest drawing, play dough and bead-stringing activities.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

- > your child doesn't seem to be acquiring new vocabulary,
- > he or she doesn't form sentences or answer questions,
- > he or she is not able to do what is asked of them using simple sentences,
- > he or she never takes the initiative in verbal communication,
- > he or she doesn't retain what has been learned or doesn't make progress,
- > doesn't imitate the people around them when playing,
- > doesn't look at you when you talk to him or her,
- > uses language that is difficult to understand or repeats in a systematic and inappropriate way,
- > he or she really struggles with words, repeats the beginning of words,
- > retches or vomits repeatedly, refuses pieces of food, selective with food, doesn't gain enough weight.



# AND WHAT ROLE DO SCREENS PLAY IN ALL THIS?

Before the age of 3, speech and language therapists recommend avoiding exposure to TV & computer screens. During this period, your child is undergoing full motor, language and sensory development. The child needs to communicate with the people around them, manipulate objects, play and experiment in order to develop and learn under appropriate conditions.

Educational programmes, cartoons, games on applications cannot replace real exchanges and activities involving manipulating objects.

Today, screens are part of our daily lives; they are in our homes, streets and shops, among many other places. Therefore, it has become essential to teach children how to use them.

## A FEW TIPS

- > encourage interaction without screens, manipulation of objects, toys and books, describe what is around the child and what is happening around them,
- > limit exposure to screens as much as possible,
- > in case of exposure, make sure that the programme broadcast is adapted to the child's age, stay by the child's side during the viewing, explain to the child what he or she is watching, what is happening.



# BILINGUALISM:

## DO YOU SPEAK SEVERAL LANGUAGES AT HOME?

You can talk to your child in your mother tongue, which is the language he or she heard during the pregnancy. The child will quickly identify the language spoken by each person in the family and adapt what he or she says.

If, at the age of 2 or 3, your child switches from one language to another within the same sentence, don't worry! You can suggest the missing words to develop their vocabulary.

### WHEN SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED?

From the age of 2, if you observe similar language difficulties in the various languages your child speaks: very limited vocabulary, barely understandable language, lack of sentences, poor comprehension, emergence of a stammer.



At any age, if you have any concerns, talk to your doctor!

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Parution : juin 2021

Illustration & graphic design:  
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