

2-3 Years

The Development of Language and Conceptual Abilities in Children

What the typical child might say and do:	What the typical child knows or thinks:	What you should say or do:	Cautions:
<p>Uses three- to four-word sentences, including the pronoun “I” (“I want milk!” “I don’t wanna nap!”)</p> <p>Asks “why” and remembers short answers</p> <p>Is able to describe own physical states using simple words (“thirsty,” “wet,” etc.)</p> <p>May chatter constantly</p> <p>Shows emotions: laughs, squeals, cries violently, throws tantrums</p> <p>Has difficulty verbalizing feelings and thoughts</p> <p>Conveys feelings with concrete remarks (says “Bad mommy!” when required to pick up own messes)</p>	<p>May sort out toys by shapes and colors by age 3</p> <p>May understand concepts such as “soon” or “after dinner” but has very limited grasp of the meaning of days and times and has no sense at all of the length of a year</p> <p>Cannot understand an issue from more than one viewpoint (one-sided reasoning)</p> <p>Experiences flourishing imaginative life</p> <p>Follows story lines; remembers ideas and characters from books</p>	<p>Approach the child gently and quietly.</p> <p>Make yourself comfortable in his/her physical space (by sitting on the floor with the child, etc.).</p> <p>Ask questions in simple terms.</p> <p>Before speaking with the child, be sure to obtain parental permission in front of the child. (“Chad, your mommy says it’s fine if I sit here and you and I play for a little while. Isn’t that right, Mrs. Colley?”)</p> <p>Check to be sure you understand. (“So you went to the store with Mommy?”)</p> <p>Use props such as puppets or crayons to play with the child.</p>	<p>Don’t expect the child to give you specific, reliable information.</p> <p>Don’t expect the child to tell you when something happened.</p> <p>Don’t pressure the child to talk with you.</p>

2-3 Years *(cont.)*

The Development of Language and Conceptual Abilities in Children

Indicators of possible developmental problems:
Appears to be mute
Speaks only intermittently
Repeats certain words/phrases (such as a TV commercial) to the exclusion of all other communication (echolalia)
Leads adults by the hand when trying to communicate needs
Shows no interest in the conversations of others
Doesn't play with others