

# How to help your child learn new words

A guide for children, aged 1-2 years.



*Young children need to hear lots of words before they can start to say them and understand when to use them. Remember, it's not just how much you say these words, but what you say and how you say it that can make a big difference. You can help your child learn new words with the following tips.*

## Follow your child's lead

This means highlighting words that come up during everyday conversations with your child. If you talk about what interests your child, it is more likely your child will pay attention and learn a new word. If your child is interested in playing with cars, you can model words like "push", "beep beep" or "fast".

## Children need to hear a word several times before they start to use it

This means that you might use a word with your child many times before your child actually says the word him/herself.

## Don't bombard your child with words

You should aim for a balanced conversation between you and your child. For example, you say something, then your child says or does something, and so on. It is important to wait after you say something so you give your child enough time to talk.

## Help your child understand what a new word means

By giving details about new words or explaining what different words mean, you build your child's understanding of new words. For example, if you are playing with cars and introduce the word "road", you

might say something like: "The car drives on the road. Roads show us where to go. We drive on black roads and dirt roads." Relating new words to your child's personal experiences also helps them to connect with new words.

## Actions can speak louder than words

Using words with actions, gestures or facial expressions can help your child understand the meaning of those words. For example, when saying the word "tired", you could do a sleeping action (hands under your head) or yawn so your child understands what that word means.

*References: 1. Weitzman, E. & Greenberg, J. (2010). ABC and Beyond: Building Emergent Literacy in Early Childhood Settings. The Hanen Centre: Toronto. 2. Rowe, M. (2012). A Longitudinal Investigation of the Role of Quantity and Quality of Child-Directed Speech in Vocabulary Development. Child Development: 83(5), 1762-1774. 3. Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. (1995). Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.*



**CALL US**  
1800 242 696



**LEARN MORE**  
[lchs.com.au](http://lchs.com.au)

