



# The Ultimate Guide to Building Your Toddler's Vocabulary

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Exploring new foods, climbing, hiding, and sprinting from room to room are all in a day's life of a toddler. This tiny human's brain is developing at rapid speeds. Take advantage of this time to develop your youngster's vocabulary. Unsure of where to start? No worries! Kids Academy has crafted resources you need to engage your toddler in the never-ending quest for knowledge.



## Benefits of Building a Strong Vocabulary from the Start

Early reading development: There is a [direct link](#) between your toddler's vocabulary and early literacy skills. Authentic conversations foster background knowledge and serve as a bridge to comprehension.

Improved ability to work through tantrums: The most effective way to help your child regulate big **emotions** is to develop communication skills. Model the use of words that express feelings and emotions in natural contexts. For example, “Mom is feeling anxious about your first day at preschool because I will miss taking you to the park.”

Social interactions: As your toddler spends more time away from home at preschool or the neighborhood playground, communicating is key for safety and **socialization**.

## What Is My Toddler Ready to Learn?

### I’m Ready to Describe the World Around Me

During this developmental stage, children are searching for language to **describe their environment**. Concentrate on describing size, texture, and color. While your toddler builds independence, introduce words to identify everyday items that they use, i.e. clothes, food, toys, and personal belongings. Your toddler should get the message that we are no longer merely pointing to what we want.

### I Need the Vocabulary to Express My Social and Emotional Needs

It’s crucial for young children to understand how to **express their feelings** and communicate with their peers. Modeling is key when teaching youngsters strategies for expressing their emotions.

### I Am Beginning to Notice Relationships Between Words

One of the beautiful things about language is the sheer volume of words at our disposal. A naturally curious toddler searches for meaning at every turn. Take advantage of this inquisitive nature by sprinkling sophisticated words into daily conversations. It’s as simple as replacing the word happy with cheery, content, or joyful.

## Infusing Vocabulary into Everyday Situations

It’s time to put it into practice. Wondering if you can start this today? Sandra Wilborne of the Barksdale Reading Institute offers practical ways to enrich your toddler’s vocabulary.

### Conversations during routine activities:

Find ways to engage your toddler in conversations throughout the day. Use questions to spark your toddler’s imagination. For example, when driving your preschooler to the park you can ask, “What do you think would happen if there were a crocodile at the park?” Asking predictable questions, like, “How was your sleep,” each morning is another effective way to build routine and practice familiar words. Be sure to listen as your toddler expresses himself and to respond with your opinions as well.

## Think Aloud:

Narrate activities as you make decisions or work through the day. For example, while driving to the grocery store you may engage in the following inner dialogue:

I notice a brown dog and a grey dog playing in the front yard with the neighbor. I think the grey dog is playful because he is jumping so much. Okay, I see a stop sign here. It's important for me to stop so that we are safe on the road. I'm starting to feel pretty warm, so I think I will turn on the air conditioner to cool the car down a bit.

## Reading Books:

Books are another fantastic resource to use for vocabulary building. Allow your toddler to choose from a variety of genres and topics. When unfamiliar words are introduced in a text, use this as an opportunity to learn and practice that new word. For example, you may come across the word destination in a book about traveling around the world. Sprinkle this word into daily conversation for the next few days and encourage your child to use the word too. Narrating daily activities and pointing out words in books are authentic strategies to teach new words.

## Engaging Activities Ready for You to Use Now

Look no further for ready-to-use resources to use with your toddler today. Kids Academy has developed interactive lessons for vocabulary development.

### Sight Word Activities

Use these at the earliest stages of writing.

- [Sight Words I, Can](#)

Speech and sight word recognition can happen simultaneously. Give your toddler practice identifying sight words with this resource.

- [Sight Words You, Like](#)

Challenge your youngster to use the sight words you and like in a sentence for additional language practice after completing this worksheet.

### Common Vocabulary

This assortment of activities provided developmentally appropriate activities to use to enrich your preschooler.

- **Color Words** Start with the primary colors and gradually advance to words like sage, lavender, and burgundy.
- **Common Object Sorts** Bring these worksheets to life by sorting the objects in real life. Go through the closet to sort winter gear from summer. Name the objects and categories.
- **Real-Life Connections** Your youngster may benefit from visual cues and posters for words that describe emotions. Flash cards or anchor charts with pictures are helpful.
- **Opposites** You can practice opposites by asking your toddler clarifying questions. Example: Do you want to wear your light jacket or a heavy coat today?
- **Shades of Meaning** Try to encourage your child to vary their word choices to clearly express themselves. Take the time to discuss the difference between the words chilly, cold, and freezing.

Time to talk, talk, talk. The benefits of early vocabulary development impact many facets of your toddler's life. As your child's first teacher, cater these best practices to meet your child's needs. Kids Academy has equipped you with developmentally appropriate and hands-on lessons. So what are you waiting for? Let's get started today.

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## Resources:

1. <https://helpmegrowmn.org/HMG/HelpfulRes/EncourageHealthDev/2Years/index.html>
2. <http://www.hanen.org/helpful-info/articles/build-your-childs-vocabulary.aspx>
3. <https://www.readingrockets.org/reading-101-guide-parents/prek/vocabulary-activities-your-pre-k-child>

