

# Speech and Language of the 3-Year-Old

At age 3 years, your child . . .

matches primary colors, names one color

knows the words *night* and *day*

uses contractions, such as *it's* or *there's*

begins to obey instructions with prepositional phrases,  
such as "put the block under the chair"

uses words to relate observations, concepts, ideas,  
and relationships

practices new words by talking to self

knows his or her name, gender, and street name,  
and several nursery rhymes

tells simple stories and can convey ideas

uses sentences of 3 to 4 words

uses nearly 1,000 words

can produce consistently the following  
sounds: *m, n, p, f, h, b,* and *w*

may repeat sounds, words, and phrases

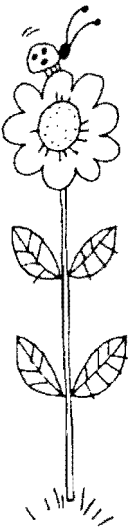
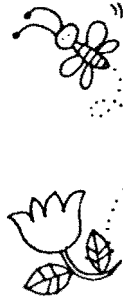
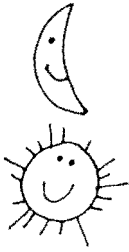
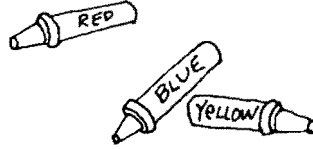
can draw a circle and a vertical line

can sing songs

expresses fatigue verbally

can stay with one activity for 8 or 9 minutes

asks "what" questions frequently



merrily johnson

2nd Edition

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You can stimulate your 3-year-old child's speech and language if you . . .

continue to extend his or her conversation

use words he or she has trouble with frequently  
in your speech

talk about similarities or differences between things

encourage your child to tell short stories using books and pictures

read longer stories to your child, then talk about objects  
and actions on the pages

pay attention to your child when he or she is talking (remember that  
repeating words and sounds is normal during this period of growth)

give your child plenty of time to respond to you; wait patiently

use a small toy to teach prepositions (for example, "Put the bear  
*under* your chin, *on top of* your head, *beside* your foot")

make up a simple story and have your child finish it

exaggerate, emphasize, and repeat words you want your  
child to learn or pay attention to

ask your child to tell you about his or her day's activities

try not to expect absolute perfection in the way your child  
pronounces words



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