

Sentence Structure Progression

At around 3 years old, children learn a lot about the rules of their language, and this allows them to start building sentences. A few things need to be in place in order for this to happen.

Before children can start forming sentences, they need to be able to:

- **say quite a few words** – you can't build a sentence if you only know a handful of words. Most 24 month olds can say at least 100 words, and the average 2 year old can say almost 300 words ¹
- **say at least a few verbs** like "sit", "come", and "go", and they are one of the key building blocks for making sentences. Most 24 month olds can say at least a few verbs, and the average child at this age can say about 40 verbs

Age	Steps in learning
2 year old (Oral Language)	Children begin combining two words together , like "want cookie", "more juice", or "Daddy home". While these "word combinations" aren't quite sentences yet, they show us that children have figured out that they can string two ideas together with their words
3 year old (Oral Language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a wider range of vocabulary. • Understand a question or instruction that has two parts, such as: "Get your coat and wait at the door". • Understand 'why' questions, like: "Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop their communication, but may continue to have problems with irregular tenses and plurals, such as 'runned' for 'ran', 'swimmed' for 'swam'. • Develop their pronunciation but may have problems saying: - some sounds: r, j, th, ch, and sh - multi-syllabic words such as 'pterodactyl', 'planetarium' or 'hippopotamus'.
Around the age of 4 (Oral Language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using sentences of four to six words – "I want to play with cars" or "What's that thing called?" • Use sentences joined up with words like 'because', 'or', 'and'? For example: "I like ice cream because it makes my tongue shiver". Is the child using the future and past tense: "I am going to the park" and "I went to the shop"? • Answer simple 'why' questions?
Writing sentence structure 3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelling using nouns- use sounds correctly
Reception	Simple captions and phrases starting with 2 word captions and progressing to 3-4 word captions (phonics application and common exception words) the red bus my pots and pans
Reception	Simple sentences A simple sentence starting with a noun followed by a verb then a preposition or object A simple sentence starting with a pronoun followed by a verb then a preposition or object I push the bus My pen is red He/ She plays with a car It is