

First 100 Words & Early Two-Word Combinations

*A research-informed overview of early expressive language development
 (Based on ASHA guidance, Rossetti, REEL-3, MacArthur-Bates CDI, and early language research)*

First 100 Words: Common Early Vocabulary Categories

People and Social Partners

Mama	dada	mommy	daddy	baby
Me	you	Mine	Grandpa	Grandma

Social words & Daily routines

Hi	Bye-bye	yes	No	Please
Thank you	Okay	All done	Uh-oh	Again

Action words/ Verbs

Go	Stop	Eat	Drink	Play
help	Want	See	Like	Look
Open	Close	Push	Pull	throw
Cash	Jump	Run	Sleep	wash

Everyday Objects* *this is personal category and varies accordingly to each family*

clothes/ dress	Book	Toy	Table	door
cup	Spoon	Bottle	Hat	Shoe
sock	Bed	blankie/ blanket	Chair	TV
phone/ipad	Pizza	diaper	plate	Cookie
Apple	Banna	Juice	Milk	water

Animals and Toys

Cat	Dog	Cow	Goat	pig
chicken	Bunny	Sheep	bird	Fish
Doll	Baby	Puzzle	book	Teddy
phone	Slide	Swing	Blocks	Bubble
Ball	Car	Truck	Train	song /music

Descriptor, Location and function words

More	Big	Hot	Up	Down
In	out	On	Off	Here
there	This	That	All gone	Help

How to Use This Handout

This handout is a **reference guide**, not a checklist. Children do not learn words in a fixed order, and vocabulary growth looks different for every child depending on routines, play, interaction, culture and exposure.

Use this handout to:

- Understand the **types of words** children commonly learn early
- Notice how **meaning and intent** develop before sentence structure
- See how single words naturally expand into **two-word combinations**
- Support conversations with your pediatrician or speech-language pathologist if you have questions

For milestone timelines, you may also refer to **CDC and ASHA developmental milestone checklists**.

Early Two-Word Combinations: Meaning Before Grammar

As vocabulary grows (often around 50–100 words), children begin combining words to express **relationships, actions, and intent**. These combinations reflect early grammar development.

Combination Type	What the child is expressing	Example
Agent + Action	Who is doing something	<i>Mommy go, daddy work, dog run</i>
Action + Object	What is happening to what	<i>eat cookie, throw ball</i>
Agent + Object	Who has or wants something	<i>mommy shoe/ baby toy</i>
Action + Location	Movement or action in space	<i>go park, sit chair</i>
Entity + Location	Where something is	<i>cup table, dog bed</i>
Attribute + Object	Describing something	<i>big ball, hot milk</i>
Recurrence+ Object	Wanting more or repetition	<i>more juice, again play</i>
Negation + Object	Refusal / non-existence	<i>no cookie, all gone milk</i>
Possessor + Object	Ownership	<i>my toy, daddy car</i>

How to Use This Two-Word Combination List

This list highlights **common meaning-based word combinations** children use as they move from single words to early phrases. These combinations reflect **what the child is trying to communicate**, not grammatical correctness

Key Takeaway

Two-word combinations signal an important shift in language development:
words are no longer used in isolation, but to express relationships and ideas.

Early language develops **layer by layer**:

interaction → single words → meaning-based combinations → grammar. A child does not need “perfect speech” or a specific number of phrases to be developing appropriately. What matters most is whether language is being used **purposefully to communicate**.

References (select)

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