Stages in Learning Vocabulary

Birth
Cries, burps, sneezes, coughs.

2 months
Vowel-like sounds: goo, aah, ooh, and others.

4 - 6 months
Babbling (“mammama”…“dada”).

9 - 12 months
Advanced babbling, with sentence-like phrasing and rhythm.

12 months
Around one year old, your child will say his or her first real word. He or she will start with single syllables, then may double some syllables, as in “wawa” or “mama.” Your child will continue to say only one word at a time for several more months.

18 - 24 months
Between a year and a half and two years old, your child will begin to talk in “telegraphic speech.” This sounds like, “Want cookie” or “Me milk.” You can extend your child’s talk by saying, “You want a cookie?” or “You want me to give you some milk?” This will help increase your child’s vocabulary.

Preschool years (2 - 5)
Around age two, you will see an explosion of language. Your child will learn vocabulary quickly, begin using new words, speak in sentences, and combine words with greater frequency and fluency. From ages 2 - 5, expect your child to ask many questions and learn to take turns speaking. Having conversations, listening, and following your child’s lead is one of the best ways to increase vocabulary and comprehension skills. This helps your child get ready to read.