[**10 Tips for Talking with Toddlers**](http://playtalklearn.com/2012/02/10-tips-for-talking-with-toddlers/) **– taken from** [**http://playtalklearn.com**](http://playtalklearn.com)

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Toddlers can be a tough crowd for conversation.  They get distracted.  They don’t pay attention. They wander off.



But when they are interested, a little chat with a toddler can be just gorgeous.

So, with the aim of making better conversationalists out of your child, here are some suggestions about how to engage a reluctant toddler in talking.

1. **Reduce background noise.** Toddler’s listening systems don’t yet allow them to filter out background noise when they are listening to you. Try to switch off the radio or TV when you are having a chat, to give their ears the best chance of hearing you.

2. Toddlers are very **self-centred.** So chatting about what they are playing with or looking at will be most interesting to them.

3. **Stay close.** If you are not within arms reach, they probably won’t realise that you’re talking to them and not someone else!  Be on the same level as your little one – at the table, or on the floor.

4. **Keep your voice interesting.** You don’t need to sound like you’re singing, but think about using intonation and volume in interesting ways when you are chatting.

5. **Comment, don’t question.** This is a conversation, not an interrogation!

6. **Be positive.** When your child talks, say “yes”, “yeah” or “right” before you reply. This gives yoru toddler the encouragement to keep going.

*Eg: your child says “dog”, you reply “Yes, it’s a dog”*

7. **Try the +1 rule.** Copy your child’s sentence, but add one word.  This keeps your utterance short enough for your child to concentrate, but shows them how to extend their sentences to the next stage.

*Eg. your child says “Car”, you reply, “Yeah, a red car”*

*Or, your child requests “Milk”, you reply, “More milk?”*

*Or, your child says “Big dog!”, you reply, “Big dog gone!”*

8. If you’ve tried to chat a few times, but with little response, then change tactic.  **Play alongside** for a while, without talking.  This shows that you are interested in what your little one is doing, but aren’t intruding into their play with your talking.  After a while of quiet, set up a little problem that you might need their help to solve – can’t find a car, the blocks not clicking together properly, or your tower keeps falling over.

9. Use [**communication temptations**](http://playtalklearn.com/2012/02/communication-temptations/) to engage them.  Introduce a new toy, do something unexpected, use a toy in a new way.  Give them something to talk about!

10. **Have fun.** This whole talking thing is supposed to be enjoyable! If you don’t look like you’re having a good time, then your toddler certainly won’t