



Toddler Language Observation Journal

*A gentle way to notice the language growth already
happening beneath the surface.*

VOLUME ONE

A KEEPSAKE JOURNAL FOR AGES 12–36 MONTHS

CHILD'S NAME

MONTH

AGE

Before The Words

Many parents count words. They keep a running tally, compare it to a chart, and feel a quiet worry when the number seems low. This journal isn't about that number.

It's about everything that comes before it — the understanding, the gestures, the sounds, the small moments of connection that are quietly building the foundation language stands on.

“The question isn't only: ‘How many words does my toddler say?’

The better question is: ‘How much language is already there?’”

This journal will help you notice it.

Language doesn't arrive all at once. It gathers, quietly, in moments most of us are too busy to catch.

Five Minutes A Day

This journal asks very little of you. A few minutes, once a day, somewhere in the ordinary rhythm of things — bath time, breakfast, the walk to the car. No special setup. No need to set anything aside for it.

- × *Don't test*
- × *Don't quiz*
- × *Don't pressure*
- Just observe
- Just notice

There are no wrong entries here. A blank box is not a failure — some days there's simply less to write down, and that's alright. This is a record of attention, not a measure of progress.

A GENTLE REMINDER

You are not behind. You are paying attention. That is the whole point of this journal.

The Three Layers Of Language

LAYER ONE

Understanding

What your toddler comprehends, long before they can say it back. Following directions, recognising names, knowing what comes next.



LAYER TWO

Communication

The reaching, pointing, showing, and shared looks that carry meaning long before a single word does.



LAYER THREE

Speech

The words themselves — the layer everyone counts, and the one that rests on the two beneath it.

Most parents only watch the top layer. This journal helps you watch all three.

Weekly Observation Dashboard

A quick mark, not a full sentence. Use this page to notice patterns across the week — what showed up once, and what showed up again and again.

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Followed directions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Responded to name	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Understood routines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pointed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Showed objects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shared attention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tried new sounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Copied sounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

A box left empty is not a missed moment — some days simply hold less to mark, and that's alright too.

What Language Growth Really Looks Like

Before the words come, these things are already language.

Every one of them counts.

LOOKING

Sustained eye contact

Holding your gaze while you speak is an act of attention — and attention is where language begins.



01

POINTING

The intentional point

Pointing to share something — not to get it, but to show you — is a profound communication milestone.



02

SHOWING

Bringing objects to share

When a toddler brings you something to look at together, they are learning the most important thing: that experience can be shared.



03

SHARED ATTENTION

Looking at the same thing together

When your toddler checks to see if you're also watching — that small glance is the foundation of every conversation they will ever have.



04

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Understanding before speaking

Every direction followed — “put your shoes on,” “come here” — shows comprehension that is already well ahead of what words can express.



05

BABBLING & IMITATING

Practising the music of language

Babbling is not random. It follows the rhythms of the language around it — rising, falling, pausing — learning the form before the content arrives.



06

These things count too. Every single one.

Understanding Tracker

What did my toddler understand today?

What directions did they follow?

What surprised me?

A FEW THINGS TO WATCH FOR

Got their shoes when asked

Looked at the right object when named

Waited at the door before being told

TODAY, I NOTICED

DATE

TODAY, I NOTICED

DATE

TODAY, I NOTICED

DATE

TODAY, I NOTICED

DATE

Gesture Tracker

How is my toddler reaching for me without words?

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Pointing

Showing

Bringing objects over

Reaching

GESTURES I SAW

DATE

GESTURES I SAW

DATE

GESTURES I SAW

DATE

GESTURES I SAW

DATE

Communication Moments

How did my toddler try to communicate today — with or without words?

DATE

WHAT HAPPENED

WHAT I NOTICED

DATE

WHAT HAPPENED

WHAT I NOTICED

DATE

WHAT HAPPENED

WHAT I NOTICED

DATE

WHAT HAPPENED

WHAT I NOTICED

Sound Exploration Tracker

What sounds is my toddler experimenting with?

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

New sounds

Repeated sounds

Babbling patterns

Copied intonation

SOUNDS I HEARD

DATE

SOUNDS I HEARD

DATE

SOUNDS I HEARD

DATE

SOUNDS I HEARD

DATE

Connection Moments

When did my toddler invite me into their world today?

WHAT THIS CAN LOOK LIKE

Looking

Waiting

Sharing attention

Initiating interaction

A MOMENT OF CONNECTION

DATE

A MOMENT OF CONNECTION

DATE

A MOMENT OF CONNECTION

DATE

A MOMENT OF CONNECTION

DATE

Tiny Signs Worth Celebrating

Not because they're milestones. Because they happened, and you noticed. That is enough.

☐ Pointed to show me something

Not to get it — to share it.

☐ Followed a new direction

Understanding always comes first.

☐ Copied a sound

Imitation is how language begins.

☐ Tried a new word

Even if it wasn't quite right yet.

☐ Shared attention

The glance that says: "are you seeing this too?"

☐ Pretend talked

Babbling as if in conversation.

☐ Brought me an object

An invitation into their world.

☐ Named something independently

On their own terms, in their own time.

Small signs matter. The fact that you noticed them matters even more.

What This Week Taught Me

A quiet space to sit with what you noticed.

What surprised me this week?

What growth would I have missed before keeping this journal?

What am I worrying about less now?

SMALL THINGS WORTH REMEMBERING

A sound or word my toddler tried for the first time...

A moment I don't want to forget...

Looking Back On This Month

A wider view, after weeks of small noticing.

WHAT CHANGED

WHAT STAYED THE SAME

What new language signs appeared this month?

What would I tell myself at the start of this month?

Each month you keep this journal is a month you chose to look more closely.

Language Growth Timeline

a month of small, quiet noticing

MONTH START

MONTH END

AT THE START OF THIS MONTH, MY TODDLER...

BY THE END OF THIS MONTH, MY TODDLER...

SOMETHING I WANT TO REMEMBER FROM THIS MONTH...

Language Grows In Moments

I used to count words too. I'd catch myself doing it in the middle of the grocery store — quietly tallying, comparing, worrying.

What changed wasn't my child's timeline. It was where I was looking. The moment I started paying attention to understanding, to gestures, to the small sounds being tried out in private, I saw a child who was already deep in the work of language — long before any of it showed up as a word I could count.

That shift didn't come from a chart. It came from slowing down enough to notice what was already there.

I hope this journal gives you that same shift. Not reassurance that everything is fine — you don't need me to tell you that. Just a closer look at what's actually happening, day by day, in the moments most of us are moving too quickly to catch.

— Moon

Tiny Language Milestones

Not a checklist. A record — of quiet moments worth keeping. Circle when you notice it. Write the date. Come back to this page often.



First intentional point

DATE NOTICED _____



First copied sound

DATE NOTICED _____



First shared attention moment

DATE NOTICED _____



First pretend conversation

DATE NOTICED _____



First spontaneous word

DATE NOTICED _____



First two-word phrase

DATE NOTICED _____



First object brought to share

DATE NOTICED _____



A moment I'll always remember

DATE NOTICED _____

*These are not achievements. They are moments. Keep this page
somewhere safe.*

Keep Noticing

This journal is a starting point, not an endpoint. These articles extend the same observational approach into different corners of everyday language and development.

1	Why Toddlers Repeat Words On echolalia, repetition, and what it really signals about language processing.	→
2	Language Grows In Moments The case for noticing over measuring — and why the small moments are the real ones.	→
3	Learning Goals 18–24 Months What to watch for across language, movement, connection, and play at this age.	→
4	7 Signs Your Toddler’s Language Is On Track A reassuring, non-clinical guide to the early signs that matter most.	→



Free Resource Library

Scan to access free printables, observation tools, and future resources — all designed for parents of toddlers 12–36 months.

[CHICHIBERRY.COM](https://chichiberry.com)

Inside The Journal

A look at the pages parents return to again and again.

CHICHIBERRY PARENTING



Toddler Language Observation Journal

A gentle way to notice the language growth already happening beneath the surface.

COVER

WEEKLY OBSERVATION DASHBOARD

	M	T	W	T	F	S
Followed directions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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Tried new sounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Copied sounds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

WEEKLY DASHBOARD

UNDERSTANDING TRACKER

What did my toddler understand today?

TODAY, I NOTICED _____ DATE _____

TODAY, I NOTICED _____ DATE _____

TODAY, I NOTICED _____ DATE _____

UNDERSTANDING TRACKER

CONNECTION MOMENTS

When did my toddler invite me into their world today?

DATE _____

WHAT HAPPENED _____

WHAT I NOTICED _____

DATE _____

WHAT HAPPENED _____

WHAT I NOTICED _____

CONNECTION MOMENTS

WEEKLY REFLECTION

What This Week Taught Me

What surprised me this week? _____

What growth would I have missed before? _____

SMALL THINGS WORTH REMEMBERING

A sound my toddler tried... _____

A moment I don't want to forget... _____

REFLECTION PAGE

Inside This Journal

What you'll find across 20 pages of gentle observation, reflection, and quiet recording.

WEEKLY DASHBOARD

Track 8 language signs across 7 days

_____	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

One quick mark per behaviour, per day. Nothing more required.

UNDERSTANDING TRACKER

Daily observation entries with date

Four entries across Understanding, Gesture, Sound, and Connection.

CONNECTION MOMENTS

What did my toddler invite me into today?

- ☐ Looking
- ☐ Waiting
- ☐ Sharing attention
- ☐ Initiating

Four dated entries with generous writing space.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

What this week taught me

Three reflection prompts + Small Things Worth Remembering keepsake section.

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING

A quieter way to watch language grow.

We hope this journal becomes a small, steady habit — a few minutes a day that help you see what's already there. Print it monthly, or keep it as a single ongoing record. There's no wrong way to use it.

EXPLORE MORE AT CHICHIBERRY PARENTING

DESCRIBING

Tiny Moments Conversation Cards

50 prompts for the conversations already happening at home.

DESCRIBING

Everyday Language Prompt Cards

Simple language-rich phrases for daily routines.

HELPING

Practical Life Cards

30 everyday tasks that build independence, ages 2–4.

OBSERVING

Toddler Observation Walk Kit

A slow-looking companion for outdoor noticing.

ONE LAST REMINDER

**“Your toddler is not a checklist.
They are a story unfolding.”**

Some of the most important language growth happens before a single word appears. You have been watching for it. That is the whole point.

Years from now, your child may not remember this journal. But they may remember how it felt to be watched closely, and listened to, long before they had the words for it. And perhaps that was the thing that mattered most.

Chichiberry Parenting

chichiberry.com
Pinterest
Observation Journals