

Speech and Language Developmental Milestones

While every child develops at their own unique pace, it's common for parents to wonder if their child's speech and language skills are typical for their age. Please use these developmental milestones to determine whether your child is on track or may need a speech and language evaluation.

Speech Development

Speech development is generally not formally assessed until your child's 3rd birthday. Use the following to gauge your child's speech skill level from ages 3 to 5 to determine if an articulation evaluation may be needed.

By his **3rd birthday**, he should produce the following sounds: **m, n, p, b, t, d, h, w, y**

- Words should have beginning and ending sounds.
- If you notice a *tongue thrust* (tongue protrudes from his mouth on sounds other than "th" – most commonly seen on s, t, z and ch), this is a difficult habit to break and should be addressed immediately.

By her **4th birthday**, she should produce the following sounds: **k, g, f, ng**

By his **5th birthday**, he should produce the following sounds: **r, l, s, sh, th, z, dg, ch, zh, v and all r, l and s blends**

Language Development

If you answer "no" to more than two questions in one age group, a speech and language evaluation may be needed.

Receptive Language

Does your child:

- Understand what you are saying when told "no"?
- Play games like *pat-a-cake* or *peek-a-boo*?
- Recognize his own name?
- Follow simple directions like "*pick up the ball*"?

12
Months

- Recognize a lot of everyday objects and people?
- Pick up familiar objects when asked?
- Hum or "sing along" with familiar tunes?
- Point to body parts and pictures when you name them?

18
Months

- Understand simple questions?
- Listen to a story with pictures?
- Stay with one activity for 5 to 7 minutes?
- Follow 2-step directions such as "*get the ball and give it to me*"?

2
Years

- Respond when you call from another room?
- Answer simple *who, what, where* and *yes or no* questions?
- Name objects and tell their functions?
- *Can your child name shapes such as triangle, circle and square?

3
Years

- Understand most of what is said at home and at school?
- Pay attention to a story and answer simple questions about it?
- Point to several colors when asked?
- Understand the meaning of words like *under, behind, between*?

4
Years

- Know his address?
- Understand the meaning of *same* and *different*?
- Stay with an activity for 12 to 14 minutes?

5
Years

- Understand the meaning of most sentences?
- Understand most opposites such as *empty vs full* or *hot vs cold*?
- Understand most basic ideas such as *through, above, and below*?
- Understand the meaning of *today, yesterday* and *tomorrow*?

6
Years

Expressive Language

Does your child:

- Try to say words she hears often?
- Say several words, even if they are not clear?
- Try to make sounds such as animal or car sounds?
- Try to put two or more sounds together such as *ba, da, wa*?

- Use 10 to 20 words?
- Begin to combine 2 words such as "*all gone*" or "*where ball*"?
- Use words to tell what she wants such as *more, up* or *juice*?
- Point or gesture to an object or to show what she wants?

- "Talk" to himself or his toys when playing?
- Use 2 and 3-word sentences?
- Use words to ask for things, protest or ask a question?
- Name pictures?

- Talk about what she did at school or at a friend's house?
- Say most sounds correctly?
- Use 4-word sentences?
- Use action verbs with -ing endings such as *eating* or *sleeping*?

- Use sentences that give details such as "*I have two red balls*"?
- Use 4 and 5-word sentences?
- Tell you a story and stay on topic?

- Use 5 and 6-word sentences?
- Use present, regular past (-ed) and future tense verbs?
- Use complex sentences such as "*I can go in the house after I take off my muddy shoes*"?

- Use correct grammar in his speech?
- Ask lots of *why, what* and *how* questions?
- Use an irregular plural (mice) and past (ran) tense?
- Tell you a story that has 4 or 5 parts?