

Language Development Chart

Here is a checklist that you can follow to determine if your child's speech and language skills are developing on schedule. You should talk to a Speech-Language Pathologist if you answer "no" to any of the following milestones.

Age	Milestones
Birth to 5 months	• Reacts to loud sounds. • Watches your face when you speak. • Vocalizes pleasure and displeasure sounds (laughs, giggles, cries, or fusses). • Makes noise when talked to.
6 - 11 months	• Understands "no-no". • Babbles (says "ba-ba-ba" or "ma-ma-ma"). • Tries to communicate by actions or gestures. • Tries to repeat your sounds.
12 - 17 months	• Attends to a book or toy for about two minutes. • Follows simple directions accompanied by gestures. • Answers simple questions nonverbally. • Points to objects, pictures, and family members. • Says two to three words to label a person or object (pronunciation may not be clear).
18 - 23 months	• Enjoys being read to. • Follows simple commands without gestures. • Points to simple body parts such as "nose." • Understands simple verbs such as "eat," "sleep." • Correctly pronounces most vowels and n, m, p, h, especially in the beginning of syllables and short words. Also begins to use other speech sounds. • Says 8 to 10 words (pronunciation may still be unclear). • Asks for common foods by name. • Makes animal sounds such as "moo." • Starting to combine words such as "more milk." • Begins to use pronouns such as "mine."
2 - 3 years	• Knows about 50 words at 24 months. • Knows some spatial concepts such as "in," "on." • Knows pronouns such as "you," "me," "her." • Knows descriptive words such as "big," "happy." • Says around 40 words at 24 months. • Speech is becoming more accurate but may still leave off ending sounds. Strangers may not be able to understand much of what is said. • Answers simple questions. • Begins to use more pronouns such as "you," "I." • Speaks in two to three word phrases. • Uses question inflection to ask for something (e.g., "My ball?"). • Begins to use plurals such as "shoes" or "socks" and regular past tense verbs such as "jumped."

3 - 4 years	• Groups objects such as foods, clothes, etc. • Identifies colors. • Uses most speech sounds but may distort some of the more difficult sounds such as l, r, s, sh,ch, y, v, z, th. These sounds may not be fully mastered until age 7 or 8. • Uses consonants in the beginning, middle, and ends of words. Some of the more difficult consonants may be distorted, but attempts to say them. • Strangers are able to understand much of what is said. Able to describe the use of objects such as "fork," "car," etc. • Has fun with language. Enjoys poems and recognizes language absurdities such as, "Is that an elephant on your head?" • Expresses ideas and feelings rather than just talking about the world around him or her. • Uses verbs that end in "ing," such as "walking," "talking." • Answers simple questions such as "What do you do when you are hungry?" • Repeats sentences.
4 - 5 years	• Understands spatial concepts such as "behind," "next to." • Understands complex questions. • Speech is understandable but makes mistakes pronouncing long, difficult, or complex words such as "hippopotamus." • Says about 200 - 300 different words. • Uses some irregular past tense verbs such as "ran," "fell." • Describes how to do things such as painting a picture. • Defines words. • Lists items that belong in a category such as animals, vehicles, etc. • Answers "why" questions.
5 years	• Understands more than 2,000 words. • Understands time sequences (what happened first, second, third, etc.). • Carries out a series of three directions. • Understands rhyming. • Engages in conversation. • Sentences can be 8 or more words in length. • Uses compound and complex sentences. • Describes objects. • Uses imagination to create stories.