

Speech, And Language Development. Children Birth to 6 Years

Childhood is a -Time of Exploration, Growth and Development

Developmental milestone information on the back of this page is provided as a guide of what to expect as your child develops. If a child does not develop one or two of the skills at the specified age, it does not necessarily mean there is a significant delay. However, if a child does not have most of the skills in an age range, a Speech and Language Evaluation may be warranted.

Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Learning

Infancy

- Talk your child throughout the day
- Respond to your child's coos, gurgles and babbling as meaningful
- Sing songs and finger plays like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and games such as peek-a-boo and pat a-cake
- Teach your child the names of everyday objects and familiar people
- Take your child with you to new places
- Read simple colorful picture books every day

Toddler Years

- Narrate your day -Talk to your child about what you are doing, what he is doing and feeling and what is going on around you
- Talk about new situations before you go, while you are there and after you get home
- Teach your child to follow simple directions by helping him/her complete them
- Expand your child's language. If he says "more" for more juice, conversationally say "More juice Do you want more juice?"
- Repeat your child's difficult to understand words back to him in a conversational way. If your child says "boo" for book while handing you a book, you can say "Book. You want to read a book."

Preschool Years

- Ask smart questions - questions you do not know the answer to vs. test questions. For example, when coloring, ask "Do you want red or green?" vs. "Is that green?"
- Talk about how objects are the same or different; describe them
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children
- Help your child tell stories using books
- Talk about what happens in the longer books you read

Early School Years

- Have conversations with your child about his or her experiences
- Talk about thoughts and feelings with your child
- Continue to take your child to new places and talk about your experiences
- Continue to read longer stories to your child and talk about them in increasingly complex ways

Developmental Milestones One to Six Years

By One Year

Expect a child to:

- Respond this or her own name
- Respond to "no"
- Tell emotions by tone of voice
- Respond to simple verbal requests
- Use his or her voice to express joy and displeasure
- Use simple gestures, such as shaking head "no"
- Babble with inflection (changes in tone)
- Say "dada" and/or "mama"
- Pay increasing attention to speech and try to imitate words
- Use vowel sounds

By Two Years

Expect a child to:

- Point to objects or pictures when named
- Recognize names of familiar people, objects, body parts
- Follow simple instructions
- Say several single words (by 15-18 MO)
- Repeat words overheard in conversation
- Use 2-3 word sentences
- Say sounds "n, m, p, b, w, h" and vowels

By Three Years

Expect a child to:

- Follow a two or three part command
- Identify almost all common objects and pictures
- Understand most sentences spoken to him
- Understand placement in space (on, under)
- Say name, age, sex
- Use pronouns (I, you, we, they)
- Use plurals (cars, babies)
- Have speech clear enough for strangers to understand most of his or her words
- Use 4-5 word sentences
- Say sounds "f, t, d, k, g"

By Four Years

Expect a child to:

- Answer questions such as "What do you do when you are hungry?"
- Identify colors
- Have mastered some basic rules of grammar
- Use verbs that end in -ing and -ed such as running, dropped
- Speak clearly enough for strangers to understand
- Speak in sentences of 5 to 6 words
- Say the sound "ng"

By Five Years

Expect a child to:

- Understand rhyming (ex: cat and hat)
- Carry out a series of three directions
- Understand time sequences (ex. first, second, third, last)
- Recall part of a story
- Use imagination to create stories
- Describe objects
- Say name and address
- Speak in sentences of more than 6 words
- Say sounds "sh, ch, l, v, j," and voiced "th" as in "this"

By Six Years

Expect a child to:

- Have a vocabulary of over 2000 words
- Define objects by their use (ex. "You eat with a fork.")
- Count 10 objects
- Understand same and different
- Ask questions for information
- Have speech that is clear and easy to understand
- Say all the speech sounds including "r, s, z," voiceless "th" as in "thin," and "s, r, l" blends as in "slide, please, green"