

Speech, Language and Feeding Milestones

Many parents wonder if their child is developing speech and language skills within the average range. It is important to remember that every child is different; therefore, every child develops speech and language at their own rate. The following information gives some precursors to receptive language skills:

Hearing/Comprehension Milestones

- **Birth - 3 Months**
 - Startles to loud sounds
 - Quiets or smiles when spoken to
 - Seems to recognize your voice and quiets if crying
 - Increases or decreases sucking behavior in response to sound
- **4 - 6 Months**
 - Moves eyes in direction of sounds
 - Responds to changes in tone of your voice
 - Notices toys that make sounds
 - Pays attention to music
- **7 Months - 1 Year**
 - Enjoys games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
 - Turns and looks in direction of sounds
 - Listens when spoken to
 - Recognizes words for common items (“cup”, “shoe”, “juice”)
 - Begins to respond to requests (“Come here,” “Want more?”)
- **1 - 2 Years**
 - Points to a few body parts when asked
 - Follows simple commands and understands simple questions (“Roll the ball,” “Kiss the baby,” “Where’s your shoe?”)
 - Listens to simple stories, songs, and rhymes
 - Points to pictures in a book when named
- **2 - 3 Years**
 - Understands differences in meaning (“go-stop,” “in-on,” “big-little,” “updown”)
 - Follows multiple requests (“Get the book and put it on the table.”)
- **3 - 4 Years**
 - Hears you when call from another room
 - Hears television or radio at the same loudness level as other family members
 - Understands simple, “who?”, “what?”, “where?”, and “why?” questions
- **4 - 5 Years**
 - Pays attention to a short story and answers simple questions about it
 - Hears and understands most of what is said at home and in school

Speech Milestones

Birth - 3 Months

- Makes pleasure sounds (cooing, gooing)
- Cries differently for different needs
- Smiles when sees you

4 - 6 Months

- Babbling sounds more speech-like with many different sounds, including p, b and m
- Vocalizes excitement and displeasure
- Makes gurgling sounds when left alone and when playing with you

7 Months - 1 Year

- Babbling has both long and short groups of sounds such as “tata upup bibibibi”
- Uses speech or non-crying sounds to get and keep attention
- Imitates different speech sounds
- Has 1 or 2 words (bye-bye, dada, mama) although they may not be clear

1 - 2 Years

- Says new words every month
- Uses some 1-2 word questions (“Where kitty?” “Go bye-bye?” “What’s that?”)
- Puts 2 words together (“more cookie”, “no juice”, “mommy book”)
- Uses many different consonant sounds of the beginning of words

2 - 3 Years

- Has a word for almost everything
- Uses 2-3 word “sentences” to talk about and ask for things
- Speech is understood by familiar listeners most of the time
- Often asks for or directs attention to objects by naming the

3 - 4 Years

- Talks about activities at school or at friends’ homes
- People outside family usually understand child’s speech
- Uses a lot of sentences that have 4 or more words
- Usually talks easily without repeating syllables or words

4 - 5 Years

- Voice sounds clear like other children’s
- Uses sentences that give lots of details (e.g. “I like to read my books”)
- Tells stories that stick to topic
- Communicates easily with other children and adults
- Says most sounds correctly except a few like l, s, r, v, z, ch, sh, th
- Uses the same grammar as the rest of the family

Feeding Milestones

Birth-6 months

Baby's diet should be breast milk or infant formula.

Amounts and number of feedings vary depending on weight and baby preference

6-9 months (sitting up)

Primary source of nutrition should continue to be breast milk or infant formula for nutrition.

“Food” is practice and not intended for nutrition at this age. Begin to introduce very thin cereals and purees when baby can sit up and can close lips on the spoon.

9-12 months (crawling)

Baby will begin to accept thicker purees and purees with lumps.

Baby will begin to move his jaw and tongue more to move food to the side of his mouth and begin to use a more mature chewing pattern. Tongue protrusion may be noted on swallow but lips will begin to close when swallowing liquids.

Baby may begin to try to feed himself.

12-36 months (walking steadily)

Your toddler should transition to drinking from an open cup. Y

our toddler may begin to develop preferences and appear to be a “picky eater”.

Provide 3 small meals and 2 snacks a day with water in between to establish a healthy meal schedule.

Provide foods which are easily mashed in the mouth, gradually increasing textures as your child is able to chew.

By 24 months, your child should be able to chew meats competently.

Let your child begin to feed himself consistently.

3 – 5 years

Continue to offer meals and snacks five times a day with the family.

Avoid “grazing” or allowing your child to eat between meals.

Chew should have matured into a rotary chew (circular movement) which allows your child to grind and shred foods, including meats.

Begin to teach your child about healthy food choices, and allow your child to participate in meal preparation.

5 years +

Your child is eating small adult meals with a variety of textures and tastes, including foods from all of the food groups.

Provide a variety of foods for your child to experience, always including a familiar food for your child in each meal.