

## 0 to 2 Year Olds Speech Therapy

The baby's first cries are early attempts at communication. By **12 months of age**, babies should **babble with changes in pitch and volume (i.e. ba ba ba ba ba)**. These sounds are initiated from close contact with parents and then turn into meaningful words! By **18 months of age**, children should be using at least **20 words** (The Hanen Centre, 2011). It is normal for children to simplify words at this stage (i.e. 'buh' for 'bus' and 'duh' for 'duck').

Amazingly, by **about 24 months of age, most children use around 200 words!** Even more astonishingly, they now start to combine some of these early words into **small sentences such as 'more juice', 'big car'**. It's a fun and happy time and from here, children continue to develop their language rapidly.

### Does my child need to see a Speech Pathologist?

- Does your child have less than 20 single words at age 18 months?
- Does your child have less than 100 single words at age 24 months?
- Is your child using only single words to communicate at age 24 months?
- Are you becoming concerned?
  
- Is your child reluctant to imitate sounds or words?
- Is your child disinterested in communicating with people?
- Is your child frustrated trying to communicate?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, an assessment by a certified practicing speech pathologist with paediatric experience is highly recommended.

### References:

The Hanen Centre. (2011). When Should you Seek Help? [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/What-Parents-Need-to-Know/Warning-Signs.aspx>

## 2 to 3 Year Olds Speech Therapy

By **2 years of age**, children are now actively exploring their environment and their understanding of the world is reflected in their **emerging pretend play** (e.g. cooking, farm animals, feeding animals and dolls).



During this time your child recognises the names of most common objects and begins to understand what objects are used for. At **2 years of age**, they can follow **2-part directions** and by **3 years of age** can answer What?, Where? and Who? questions.

Your child is beginning to understand simple **concept words** such as 'big/little', 'hot/cold', and **position words** like 'in', 'on', 'under'. Your child will talk whilst playing and will want to tell you about what she/he is doing or observing. By **3 years of age**, children will also seek to learn more about their world by **asking many questions** (The Hanen Centre, 2011).

Your child will be producing 3 to 4 word sentences, even longer as they approach 3 years of age. Vocabulary will grow from an average of **200 words at 2 years of age**, to around **600**

**words at 3 years of age.** Sentences will become more complex over this time. The beginning of early grammar may emerge with the use of plurals (cats), verbs (running, jumping) and pronouns (I, me, my, you).

### Does my child need to see a Speech Pathologist?

- Is your child not joining two words together at age 2 years?
- Is your child using less than 100 words at age 2 years?
- Is your child using less than 300 words at age 2 ½ years?
- Is your child using less than 3-4 word phrases at age 3 years?
- Are you having difficulty understanding your child's speech?
- Is your child not interested in communicating?
  
- Does your child have difficulty understanding what you say to him/her?
- Is your child stuttering?
- Is your child frustrated when trying to communicate?
- Are you becoming concerned?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, an assessment by a certified practicing speech pathologist with paediatric experience is highly recommended.

### References:

The Hanen Centre. (2011). When Should you Seek Help? [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/What-Parents-Need-to-Know/Warning-Signs.aspx>

## 3 to 5 Year Olds Speech Therapy

Fast paced speech and language development continues at this most exciting stage of communication development. Children range now from generally speaking in **complete sentences** such as 'the children fed the horse', to **complex sentences** such as 'she doesn't swim when it is cold and when the wind blows'.



Between **3 – 3 ½ years of age** children are **connecting and co-ordinating many ideas in a single sentence**. This shows how far children have developed in just a few short years. What's more, their articulation is becoming clearer!

By **4 years of age**, a child's speech should be **easily intelligible** even to an unfamiliar listener. They are producing all sounds at the ends of words and many long sounds such as 'f', 's', 'sh', 'ch'. They can **understand longer and more complex instructions and directions** and readily **engage in a two-way conversation** by expressing ideas, thoughts, requests and demands!

Between **3 – 4 years of age** children rapidly increase their vocabulary to **approximately 1500 words**, and they strengthen their progress by utilising many grammatical components such as **pronouns** (he, she, her, his), **word endings** ('ing', 'ed', 'ly'), **plurals** ('cats'), **adjectives** ('dirty', 'hungry'), **past tense verbs** ('walked'), and some **small verbs** ('is', 'are', 'have').

By **5 years of age** their **grammatical competence is generally completed**. Comparatives and superlatives ('er' and 'est') as well as complex verbs such as 'love' and 'decided' are used. Many other complex parts of language are used. "Discourse" now develops and complex conversations are now evident. Language should have **connectivity of sentences to support story telling skills** (The Hanen Centre, 2011).

These 5 year olds have a great foundation of their 'first' (oral) language to give them the best start for the development of their 'second' (written) language (reading, writing, spelling) as they embark on their first year of school!

### **Does my child need to see a Speech Pathologist?**

- Is your child using less than 3-4 word phrases at age 3 years?
- Is your child's speech difficult to understand?
- Does your child leave out small words when saying sentences at age 4 years?
- Do you suspect your child may be stuttering?
  
- Does your child have difficulty understanding what is said to him/her?
- Is your child frustrated when trying to communicate?
- Are you becoming concerned?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, an assessment by a certified practicing speech pathologist with paediatric experience is highly recommended.

### **References:**

*The Hanen Centre. (2011). When Should you Seek Help? [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/What-Parents-Need-to-Know/Warning-Signs.aspx>*