

Speech and Language Developmental Milestones

Birth to 5 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reacts to sounds, turns head to a sound source• Coos or makes noises when talked to (blows raspberries)• Vocalizes pleasure and displeasure sounds differently (laughs, giggles, cries, etc)• Attends to your face when you speak <p>Activities to encourage your child's language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to your child's coos, gurgles, and babbling• Talk to your child as you care for him or her throughout the day
6 to 11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands "no-no"• Babbles (says "ba-ba-ba", "ma-ma-ma")• Tries to communicate by actions or gestures (pointing)• Tries to repeat your sounds• Says first word <p>Activities to encourage your child's language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read colorful books to your child every day• Tell nursery rhymes and sing songs• Verbally name everyday items and familiar people throughout the day• Play simple games with your child such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"• Attends to a book or toy for around 2 minutes• Answers simple questions nonverbally (head nod, pointing, etc)• Begins to use long strings of different syllable combinations, known as jargon. Jargon can sound like baby is using her own language and may contain words and adult-like speech patterns.• Produces p, b, m, d, and n correctly• Says 2 to 3 words to label a person or object (pronunciation may not be clear)• Points to objects, pictures, family members, etc• Tries to imitate simple words
12 to 17 months	<p>Activities to encourage your child's language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to your baby about everything you're doing while you're with them• Talk simply, clearly, and slowly to your child• Always say words correctly even if your child does not. For example, your child may say "wa wa" and you say "water, that's right!"• Look at your child when he or she talks to you• Describe what your child is doing, feeling, hearing• Praise your child's efforts to communicate by smiles, repeating and talking back
18 to 23 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows simple commands• Identifies body parts• Asks for common foods by name• Makes animal sounds, such as "moo" or environmental sounds "choo choo"• Uses 8-15 words correctly and frequently• Begins to combine words such as "more milk"

- Starts to use pronouns such as “mine”

Activities to encourage your child's language

- Read book with simple pictures, ask your child to point to certain items in the pictures
- Talk about new situations before you go, while you're there, and again when you are home
- Play reciprocal games (rolling ball back and forth) to teach turn taking
- Offer your child choices and have them verbalize a response. For example, “Do you want the ball or the car?” rather than just “Do you want the ball?”
- Expand on your child’s utterances. For example, if they say “cookie” you model “I want a cookie.”
- Set up barriers where your child has to seek your help. A favorite toy is out of reach, the lid is on too tight, etc. These barriers are motivating for initiating communication.
- Understands and uses approximately 40 words at 24 months
- Knows some spatial concepts, such as "in" or "on"
- Understands some spatial concepts “in”, “on”, etc
- Knows some descriptive words such as “big” or “happy”
- Answers simple questions
- Uses question inflection to ask for something (“My ball?”)
- Begins to use pronouns, such as "mine" and plurals
- Uses 3-word sentences
- Speech is becoming more accurate but may still leave off ending sounds.

Activities to encourage your child's language

- Repeat new words over and over
- Help your child listen and follow instructions by playing games: "pick up the ball," "Touch Daddy's s nose"
- Narrate activities as you complete them to help introduce sequencing (first, second, third, etc)
- Listen attentively as your child talks to you
- Describe what you are doing, planning, thinking
- Have the child deliver simple messages for you (Mommy needs you, Daddy)
- Carry on conversations with the child, preferably when the two of you have some quiet time together
- Ask questions to get your child to think and talk
- Show the child you understand what he or she says by answering, smiling, and nodding your head
- Groups objects into categories, such as foods or clothes
- 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.
- Strangers are able to understand much of what is said
- Able to describe the use of objects, such as "fork" or "car"
- 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" or "talking"

2 to 3
years

3 to 4 years

- Answers simple questions, such as "What do you do when you are hungry?"
- Repeats sentences

Activities to encourage your child's language

- Talk about how objects are the same or different
- Help your child to tell stories using books and pictures
- Provide opportunities for social interactions with same aged peers
- Read longer stories to your child and ask them simple questions about what is read
- Understands spatial concepts, such as "behind" or "next to"
- Understands complex questions
- Speech is understandable, but makes mistakes pronouncing long, difficult, or complex words, such as "hippopotamus"
- Uses some irregular past tense verbs, such as "ran" or "fell"
- Describes how to do things, such as painting a picture
- Lists items that belong in a category, such as animals or vehicles
- Answers "why" questions

Activities to encourage your child's language

- Help your child sort objects and things into categories (things you eat, animals)
- Let your child help you plan activities such as what you will make for dinner
- Let them tell and make up stories for you
- Encourage imaginative play
- Play board or card games with your child
- Understands time sequences (for example, what happened first, second, or third)
- Carries out a series of 3 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

Activities to encourage your child's language

- Continue to read longer stories and ask more complex questions during book reading like "why" and "how".
- Have your child explain their favorite game, sport, etc to you
- Have them draw a picture then tell you a story about what they drew
- Look at family photos and talk to him about your family history

4 to 5 years

5 years