



SPEECH & LANGUAGE Developmental Milestones

»→ BIRTH – 5 YEARS ←«

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REFERENCES:

- American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2011). How does your child hear and talk?. Retrieved from: <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart/>
- Lanza, J. R., & Flahive, L. K. (2008). *Guide to communication milestones: Concepts, feeding, morphology, literacy, mean length of utterance, phonological awareness, pragmatics, pronouns, questions, speech sound acquisition, vocabulary*. East Moline, IL: LinguiSystems.
- Gard, A., Gilman, L., & Gorman, J. (1993). *Speech and language development chart* (2 ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Owens, R. (2012). *Language Development: An Introduction* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

>>> 0-12 MONTHS <<<

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Developmental Milestones

WHAT SHOULD MY CHILD BE DOING AT EACH AGE? REMEMBER EACH CHILD IS UNIQUE AND WILL DEVELOP AT HIS OR HER OWN RATE. USE THE GUIDE AS A TOOL TO LEARN WHAT STEP IS NEXT.



LISTENING



COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE USE



SPEECH SOUNDS & TALKING



SOCIAL LANGUAGE

| 0-3 MONTHS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Startles with loud sounds Smiles or quiets down in response to your voice Starts to recognize your voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cries differently for varying needs Makes cooing sounds (e.g. vowel sounds) Makes reflexive sounds (e.g. coughing, crying, burping) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smiles at people and when spoken to |
|-------------|---|---|--|
| 3-6 MONTHS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eye gaze moves in direction of sounds Recognizes and reacts to a difference in tone of voice (e.g. friendly vs angry voices) Attends to music and toys that make sounds Listens and watches you when you're speaking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to make sounds with lips together such as "raspberries" Sound productions are constantly changing Produces mostly vowels (e.g. "ah") Some babbling appears (e.g. "bah-bah-bah") | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babbles to gain attention Establishes eye contact Makes sounds that express mood |
| 6-12 MONTHS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to sounds even when they cannot see the source Moves to music Responds to own name Begins to understand common words for objects Begins to respond to simple requests (e.g. "come here") | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Points to direct attention toward an object Using gestures to communicate (e.g. waving, reaching up, shaking head "no") Says one or two words, like "mama" or "bye" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babbles with increased length using CVCV patterns (e.g. "papa" "mama") New consonant sounds emerge, like /t, d, n/ New vowel sounds emerge Imitates different speech sounds Responds to no Likes to look and smile in the mirror Points to learn new vocabulary Imitates rise and fall of voice Uses sounds (e.g. shouting) and gestures to attract attention Copies simple actions and plays cause-and-effect games (e.g. pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo, "so big!") |

>>> 12-24 MONTHS <<<

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LANGUAGE

12 - 18 MONTHS

- Follows simple one-step directions (e.g. "Get your toy")
- Starts to understand spatial concepts (e.g. up, in, down)

- Has a vocabulary of around 2-6 words at 12 months
- Uses 1-2 words at a time to communicate
- Pairs gestures with words to communicate (e.g. reaching up and saying "up!")
- Repeats words that are heard

- Speech can be difficult to understand
- Continues to imitate speech sounds and words
- Beginning to use the following sounds: p, b, m, t, d, n, h, w, g, k, s, j

- Continues actions when they are praised or when others laugh
- Engages in parallel play (playing next to someone, but not with them)
- Copies adult models during playtime
- Refers to themselves by their name (instead of saying "I")
- Takes turns ("my turn, your turn")
- Says "no" to protest

18 - 24 MONTHS

- Understands and points to some body parts when prompted
- Reacts to questions like "where's your book?" "Where's mom?"
- Understands and points to vocabulary in pictures (e.g. in a book or on a flashcard)
- Attends to short stories

- Has a vocabulary of about 50-100 words around 18 months
- Starts to speak in 2 word phrases around 24 months (e.g. "Mommy shoe")
- Uses mostly nouns
- Starts to ask simple questions (e.g. "what's that?")
- Pronouns used: I, it, my, me, mine, you

- Speech is understood 25-50% of the time to a familiar listener
- Produces 70% of the following sounds correctly: p, b, m, t, d, n, h, w, g, k, s, j
- Increases use of two-syllable words (e.g. "doggy" "yummy")

- Attention to task during play increases to about 7 minutes
- Engages in self-talk during play
- Starts to use conversational words (e.g. hi, bye, please, and thank you) and gestures (waving "hi" or "bye")
- Verbal turn taking increases
- Eye contact increases during interactions
- Increase in spontaneous speech and imitation

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24 – 36 MONTHS

- Follows two step commands (e.g. "Pick up the play doh and put it away")
- Understands around 500–900 words
- Differentiates between "one" and "all"
- Understands directions involving adverbs and adjectives (e.g. "Run fast" or "Point to the big dog")
- Responds to family related vocabulary, like sister or aunt
- Understands and selects pictures of verbs

- Vocabulary is increasing: uses about 200–300 words around 24 months
- Speaks in 2–3 word phrases
- Increases complexity when asking who, what, and where questions
- Pronouns used: your, he, she, yours, we
- Uses verb tense without a helping verb ("is"): (e.g. "Daddy eating")
- Emergence of phrases with subject + verb + object (e.g. "Daddy throw ball")
- Uses articles and conjunctions ("a, the, and, so, but, or")
- Uses regular plural forms (e.g. "cats")

- Speech is understood 50–75% of the time to a familiar listener
- More consistent use of the following sounds: k, g, t, d, ng, f, y

- Stays on topic for longer periods of time
- Engages in short group activities
- Uses more language while playing
- Stories lack elements such as sequence and plot, but include descriptions and labels
- Communicates emotions and feelings verbally, instead of physically (e.g. says "Can I have that?" instead of grabbing)
- Associative play skills emerge (starting to engage with others during play, sharing, taking turns)

>>> 36- 60 <<<
MONTHS

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SOCIAL
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| 36 - 48 MONTHS | LISTENING | COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE USE | SPEECH SOUNDS & TALKING | SOCIAL LANGUAGE |
|----------------|---|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds when name is called from a distance Responds to basic wh-questions involving their surroundings or activities they're engaged in (e.g. "What are you doing?") Demonstrates increased listening skills Listens to stories of increased length and complexity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary increases to around 1,000 words by 36 months Speaks in 3-4 word phrases Pronouns used: they, us, hers, his, them, her, its, our, him, myself, yourself, ours, their, theirs Uses irregular (e.g. drove, ate) and regular (e.g. walked) past tense verbs Irregular plurals emerging (e.g. "sheep") Uses "is" Uses possessive: 's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech is understood 75-90% of the time to a familiar listener Starts to use sounds that start with: r, l, s | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in cooperative play (playing with someone, securing their attention, communicating with them) Talks about events and actions that previously occurred (e.g. what they did yesterday) Able to separate from caregiver with greater ease Starts to engage in dramatic play, including dress-up, playing house, puppet shows, etc. Acts frustrated if they are not understood Stories are more organized, including a topic and sequenced elements |
| 48 - 60 MONTHS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to understand and answer simple questions about stories Recalls and repeats up to four digits said to them Repeats short sentences Follows 2-3 step commands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary increases to 1,600 words by 48 months Phrases continue to increase in length, to 4+ words Pronouns used: herself, himself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves Uses vocabulary like "if, so, could, would" in sentences Uses comparative -er (e.g. "smaller, faster") Emerging grammar skills in sentences Has a vocabulary of 2,200-2,500 words at 60 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech is understood 90-100% of the time to a familiar listener Starts to use sounds: ch, sh, z, j, v | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives a request with a justification (e.g. "Come here! I want to play!") Asks peers to join in play or activities Uses words to protest and compromise during play Uses imagination when talking i.e. "when I grow up . . ." Stories continue to increase in complexity, and may involve a plot Repeats their message if misunderstood Starts to understand and use gender relationships (i.e. relating colors or topics to a specific gender) |