

| Age of Child | Communication Milestones | Warning Signs <i>Note: Should refer at any age if you have concerns</i> |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 3 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • becomes startled at loud noises • looks at you • is soothed by calm, gentle voices • likes to cuddle and enjoys being held • cries, gurgles, grunts • has strong muscles in cheeks and tongue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows no reaction to sound • doesn't make eye contact when held |
| 4 - 6 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • watches your face with interest when you talk • tries to "talk" to you • enjoys "talking" with you; smiles at you • coos and squeals for attention • has different cries for different things (e.g. when hungry, sick, tired) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • missing any of the milestones |
| 6 - 12 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands some common words when used with gestures ("bye", "up") • gives, shows or points to objects • tries to say sounds and words (e.g. "ba ba", "na na") • tries to sing along with radio and T.V. • laughs and may imitate a cough • babbles (strings of sounds may sound like sentences) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doesn't understand or use gestures (waving, reaching, raises arms) • isn't making sounds or babbling • doesn't imitate you (actions, noises, speech sounds) • doesn't enjoy baby games (Peek-a-boo) • has had frequent ear infections |
| 12 - 18 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • starts to use words (may not be clear) • understands simple questions/statements (e.g. "Where is your nose?") • nods "yes" and shakes head for "no" • enjoys rhythm and likes to dance to music • starts to pretend play (e.g. "feeds" a doll or stuffed animal) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fewer than 20 words by 18 months • child is not sociable • doesn't understand simple questions • has had frequent ear infections |
| 18 - 24 months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • says some 2 word sentences (e.g. "more milk", "daddy gone", "me go") • asks for things they want (e.g. a cookie or a toy) • asks "whatssat?" a lot • understands simple questions (e.g. "Where's mommy?") • understands simple directions (e.g. "Get your coat") • understands common words (e.g. names, body parts, favourite toys) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not trying to talk • is gesturing/pointing instead of talking • fewer than 20 words by 18 months • has fewer than 50 words and no two-word combinations by 24 months • started to talk but stopped • doesn't understand common words • has had frequent ear infections |

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|--|---|--|
| 24 - 36 months (2 - 3 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> combines words in 2 - 3 word sentences (e.g. "me do it") follows simple directions (e.g. "Put teddy-bear to bed") can understand longer explanations answers simple questions (e.g. "What's your name?") asks lots of questions can put a toy "in", "on" "under" when asked answers simple questions about objects (e.g. "Which one do we eat with?") can be understood 50 - 75% of the time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is very difficult to understand is not speaking in short sentences doesn't understand simple directions and concepts ("big", "little", "up", "down", "in") rarely makes eye contact prefers to play alone has periods of "stuttering" lasting longer than 3 months has had frequent ear infections |
| 36 - 48 months (3 - 4 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows 2 related directions (e.g. "Close the book and give it to me") gives full name when asked (first and last name) understands questions about a picture story (e.g. "Where did the bunny go?") reasons - answers (e.g. "What do you do when you're hungry/cold?") tells a short story (e.g. "two kids played ball") sentences are usually 3 and 4 words long gives directions (e.g. "Fix this for me") asks many questions (e.g. "what", "where", "when") can be understood at least 75% of the time can talk about things that happened in the past is using -ing endings, is/are verbs, plurals, possessives (e.g. "Dad's shoes") | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is difficult to understand; listeners often have to "guess" gets frustrated when trying to speak has periods of "stuttering" lasting longer than 3 months has difficulty playing with others is not speaking in full sentences doesn't ask or understand questions and follow 2-step directions can't carry on a short conversation has had frequent ear infections |
| 48 - 60 months (4 - 5 years) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talks like an adult with only a few errors usually understandable although may still be errors on v, l, r, s, th, ch, sh and some consonant blends follows 3 related directions (e.g. "Get your crayons, make a picture and give it to the baby") more reasoning - answers questions like "What do you do when you're sleepy/thirsty?" or "What should you do if you hurt yourself?" describes objects and events can show you harder concepts like "top" and "bottom" can tell you the meaning of words recognizes some letters and sounds; understands and can make up rhymes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not speak clearly in adult-like sentences with only a few errors is stuttering has difficulty following directions has difficulty getting thoughts out so others can understand has difficulty finding the right word has difficulty with changes cannot tell a story has difficulty with songs & rhyming has had frequent ear infections |

Development of Speech Sounds

There is a developmental pattern for the development of speech sounds that *most* children follow.

Sounds that typically develop first include:

p, b, n, m, w, h

Sounds that develop next include:

f, k, g, t, d, y

Later developing sounds include:

l, r, s, z, v, th, sh, ch, j, consonant blends (eg: spoon, blue, truck)

When Should I Be Concerned?

How clear should a child's speech be?

In addition to when your child uses sounds, we also have to consider how easy they are to understand. Someone who does not know your child should be able to understand:

- about 50% of what a 2 year old says
- about 75% of what a 3 year old says
- about 90% of what a 4 year old says
- almost 100% of what a 5 year old says

Watch for errors that may be of more concern such as:

- Dropping sounds (e.g. "un" for "sun", especially after age three)
- Using one or two sounds everywhere
- Not using a sound correctly by the age at which it is expected (see above)