



Speech and Language Developmental Milestones

Birth to 1 Year

0-3 Months

- Alerts to sound.
- Quiets or smiles when you talk.
- Makes sounds back and forth with you
- Makes sounds that differ depending on whether they are happy or upset.
- Coos, makes sounds like ooooo, ahhh, and mmmmm.
- Recognizes loved ones and some common objects.
- Turns or looks toward voices or people talking.

4-6 Months

- Giggles and laughs.
- Responds to facial expressions.
- Looks at objects of interest and follows objects with their eyes.
- Reacts to toys that make sounds, like those with bells or music.
- Vocalizes during play or with objects in mouth.
- Vocalizes different vowel sounds—sometimes combined with a consonant—like uuuuummm, aaaaaaagoo, or daaaaaaaa.

Birth to 1 Year

7-9 Months

- Looks at you when you call their name.
- Stops for a moment when you say, "No."
- Babbles long strings of sounds, like mamamama, upup, or babababa.
- Looks for loved ones when upset.
- Raises arms to be picked up.
- Recognizes the names of some people and objects.
- Pushes away unwanted objects.

10-12 Months

- By age 10 months, reaches for objects.
- Points, waves, and shows or gives objects.
- Imitates and initiates gestures for engaging in social interactions and playing games, like blowing kisses or playing peek-a-boo.
- Tries to copy sounds that you make.
- Responds to simple words and phrases like "Go bye-bye" and "Look at Mommy."
- Says one or two words—like mama, dada, hi, and bye

13-18 Months

- Looks around when asked "where" questions—like "Where's your blanket?"
- Follows directions—like "Give me the ball," "Hug the teddy bear," "Come here," or "Show me your nose."
- Points to make requests, to comment, or to get information.
- Shakes head for "no" and nods head for "yes."
- Understands and uses words for common objects, some actions, and people in their lives.
- Identifies one or more body parts.
- Uses gestures when excited, like clapping or giving a high-five, or when being silly, like sticking out their tongue or making funny faces.
- Uses a combination of long strings of sounds, syllables, and real words with speech-like inflection.





Speech and Language Developmental Milestones

19-24 Months

- Uses and understands at least 50 different words for food, toys, animals, and body parts. Speech may not always be clear—like du for “shoe” or dah for “dog.”
- Puts two or more words together—like more water or go outside.
- Follows two-step directions—like “Get the spoon, and put it on the table.”
- Uses words like me, mine, and you.
- Uses words to ask for help.
- Uses possessives, like Daddy’s sock.

2-3 Years

- Uses word combinations often but may occasionally repeat some words or phrases, like baby – baby – baby sit down or I want – I want juice.
- Uses some plural words like birds or toys.
- Uses -ing verbs like eating or running. Adds -ed to the end of words to talk about past actions, like looked or played.
- Gives reasons for things and events, like saying that they need a coat when it’s cold outside.
- Asks and answers questions with reasoning.
- Correctly produces p, b, m, h, w, d, and n in words.

3-4 Years

- Tells you a story from a book or a video.
- Understands and uses more location words, like inside, on, and under.
- Uses words like a or the when talking, like a book or the dog.
- Correctly produces t, k, g, f, y, and -ing in words.
- Says all the syllables in a word.
- Says the sounds at the beginning, middle, and end of words.
- By age 4 years, your child talks smoothly. Does not repeat sounds, words, or phrases most of the time.
- By age 4 years, your child speaks so that people can understand most of what they say.
- By age 4 years, your child says all sounds in a consonant cluster containing two or more consonants in a row—like the tw in tweet or the -nd in sand. May not produce all sounds correctly—for example, spway for “spray.”





Speech and Language Developmental Milestones

4-5 Years

- Produces grammatically correct sentences. Sentences are longer and more complex.
- Includes (1) main characters, settings, and words like and to connect information and (2) ideas to tell stories.
- Uses at least one irregular plural form, like feet or men.
- Understands and uses location words, like behind, beside, and between.
- Uses more words for time—like yesterday and tomorrow—correctly.
- Follows simple directions and rules to play games.
- Blends word parts, like cup + cake = cupcake. Identifies some rhyming words, like cat and hat.
- Produces most consonants correctly, and speech is understandable in conversation.

Tips to support speech and language development:

1. Quality over Quantity: It's not about how much you say, but how you say it! Engaging in fun, back-and-forth chats with your little ones helps their language skills grow. Get down on their level, share a toy, or dive into a book together—just remember to pause and let them take their turn. It's all about making those moments count!

2. Play: Instead of saying, "Say dog," try making it part of the play! You might go, "Oh no, the cow is coming... go away, cow! Go away... (pause)... Cow!" Make it a game—point to objects, name them, and see if your little one will copy you. It's all about turning play into an adventure in words!

3. Read: Books are more than just words on a page—they're doorways to imagination! Let your little ones turn the pages, hold the book, or search for hidden treasures in the pictures. And don't be afraid to make up your own silly stories—anything to keep them hooked and happy!

4. Get Moving and Grooving: Whether it's running, jumping, swinging, or crawling, get your bodies moving and talk about it! "Let's jump like a frog! Ribbit!" Big movements lead to big words, and little ones learn by copying what they see and hear. So, make it fun, make it active, and watch the words start to flow!



Tips for Boosting Language Skills While Reading to Your Little One (Ages 0-5)

Infants (0-12 Months)

- **Bright Colors & Patterns:** Choose vibrant, high-contrast books.
- **Read with Expression:** Use different tones and pitches to make the story exciting. Your baby loves to hear your voice!
- **Point & Describe:** Build vocabulary by pointing to pictures and describing them.
- **Interactive Books:** Use crinkle and sound-making books. Let baby play with pages.
- **Engage with Your Baby:** Make eye contact, raise your eyebrows, and look from the book to your baby. This joint attention is crucial for their development.

Babies (12-24 months)

- **Incorporate Movement:** Use body movements like clapping, stomping, and waving. Imitating these actions can be a precursor to their first words.
- **Face-to-Face:** Sit face-to-face to promote imitation.
- **Use Environmental sounds:** Animal sounds, car noises, ect. encourage imitation and make reading fun!
- **Imitate and Interact:** Focus on the interaction rather than just the words. Imitate your baby's sounds and gestures to encourage communication.

Toddlers (2-3 years)

- **Point and Label:** Point to pictures and label actions, objects, and daily events. Pause to see if your toddler will imitate you.
- **Predictable and Interactive Books:** Choose books with predictable patterns and interactive elements like flaps and sensory textures.
- **Expand on Their Words:** If your child says "car," you can say, "Yes, that's a red car. It goes fast!"
- **New Themes:** Introduce new themes and vocabulary.

Preschoolers (3-5 years)

- **Books with Simple Stories:** Choose books with a clear beginning, middle, and end to help your child understand story structure.
- **Relate to Real Life:** Connect stories to their experiences.
- **Encourage Predictions:** Use phrases like, "I wonder what will happen next," and have your child guess.
- **Silly Voices:** Focus on intonation and use fun voices for characters.
- **Retell Stories:** Encourage your child to retell the story while you point to the pictures.

