

## Speech and Language Developmental Milestones

This list is not intended to be all-inclusive of a child's speech and language skills. The absence of one or more skills doesn't necessarily constitute a speech or language delay. If your child has not been evaluated by a speech-language pathologist, one should be consulted if you are concerned about your child's speech and language development.

Expected Age of Development	Pre-linguistic Skills (play and cognitive skills)	Receptive Language (what your child understands)	Expressive Language (what your child says)	Sound Production
0-3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child makes eye contact with adult</li> <li>• Alerts to sounds</li> <li>• Watches a speaker's mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiets to a familiar voice</li> <li>• Moves in response to voice</li> <li>• Discriminates between angry and friendly voices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a hunger cry</li> <li>• Vocalizes to show pleasure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes sounds in the back of the throat</li> </ul>
3-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains eye contact with speakers</li> <li>• Turns head to other's voice</li> <li>• Imitates facial expressions with adults</li> <li>• Reaches for and hits objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins to recognize own name</li> <li>• Responds to "no"</li> <li>• Smiles in response to speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes turns vocalizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes "raspberries"</li> </ul>
6-9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitates gestures of adult</li> <li>• Responds to noises that are not visible and searches for hidden objects</li> <li>• Attends to pictures</li> <li>• Begins to play games with adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to "no" most of the time</li> <li>• Moves toward or looks for family members when named</li> <li>• Responds to "Come here" (only if your child is mobile [able to roll, scoot, or crawl])</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocalizes in response to objects that move</li> <li>• Shouts or vocalizes to gain attention</li> </ul>	<p>A variety of sounds will be produced as the child adds new words. Information regarding sound production is listed for ages when 75% of children correctly produce the specific sound.</p>
9-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plays "Peek-a-boo"</li> <li>• Waves <i>hi</i> and <i>bye</i></li> <li>• Holds toy out to show others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to some verbal requests such as giving objects and gesturing when asked "Want up?"</li> <li>• Identifies two body parts on self</li> <li>• Participates in speech routine games like "So Big"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Says "Mama" or "Dada"</li> <li>• Says 1-2 words spontaneously</li> </ul>	<p>(See comment at 6-9 months.)</p>

Adapted from D. L. Hedrick, E. J. Prather, & A. R. Tobin (1975, 1984) *Sequenced Inventory of Communication Development*; L. Rossetti (1990). *The Rossetti Infant-Toddler Language Scale*; and I. L. Zimmerman, V. G. Steiner, & R. E. Pond (2002) *Preschool Language Scale*.

## Speech and Language Developmental Milestones, *continued*

Expected Age of Development	Pre-linguistic Skills (play and cognitive skills)	Receptive Language (what your child understands)	Expressive Language (what your child says)	Sound Production
12–15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates turn-taking routines (e.g., sharing something to eat, beeping each other's noses)</li> <li>• Hugs dolls, stuffed animals, people</li> <li>• Hands toys to adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows one-step commands during play (e.g., "Put it on" with blocks, "Push it down" with toy with button)</li> <li>• Responds to "Give me"</li> <li>• Identifies three body parts on self or doll</li> <li>• Understands some prepositions such as <i>up</i> and <i>down</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shakes head <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i></li> <li>• Says 8–10 words spontaneously</li> <li>• Tries to sing along with familiar songs</li> <li>• Imitates new words</li> <li>• Imitates three animal sounds</li> </ul>	(See comment at 6–9 months.)
15–18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plays ball with an adult</li> <li>• Imitates housework activities</li> <li>• Identifies self in mirror</li> <li>• Requests assistance from an adult (e.g., with wind-up toy or other toy that cannot operate on own; child gives to adult to help)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies six body parts or clothing items on a doll</li> <li>• Chooses two familiar objects when asked (e.g., gets items as you name them, such as bottle, ball, or shoes)</li> <li>• Identifies objects by categories (e.g., able to put blocks with other blocks, balls with other balls, and animals with other animals)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Says 15 meaningful words</li> <li>• Asks for "more"</li> <li>• Asks "What's that?"</li> <li>• Names 5–7 objects when asked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses consonants <i>t, d, n, h</i> in isolation</li> </ul>
18–21 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretends to play musical instruments</li> <li>• Pretends to dance</li> <li>• Uses two toys together in pretend play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies four body parts and clothing items on self</li> <li>• If mobile, follows directions to "Sit down" and "Come here"</li> <li>• Understands the meaning of action words</li> <li>• Identifies pictures named</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitates two- and three-word phrases</li> <li>• Requests toys or food with vocalizations and gestures</li> <li>• Names some pictures</li> </ul>	(See comment at 6–9 months.)
21–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If mobile, pushes a stroller or shopping cart</li> <li>• Stacks and assembles toys and objects, such as nesting blocks</li> <li>• Matches sounds to pictures of animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puts away toys on request</li> <li>• Follows two-step related commands (e.g., "Get the diaper and bring it to me" or "Pick up the cup and take a drink.")</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Says two-word phrases frequently</li> <li>• Uses 50 different words</li> <li>• Says three-word phrases occasionally</li> <li>• Says own name to refer to self</li> </ul>	(See comment at 6–9 months.)

## Speech and Language Developmental Milestones, *continued*

Expected Age of Development	Pre-linguistic Skills (play and cognitive skills)	Receptive Language (what your child understands)	Expressive Language (what your child says)	Sound Production
24–27 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretends to write</li> <li>• Pretends to talk on the phone</li> <li>• Slaps hand in response to “Gimme five”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Points to four action words in pictures</li> <li>• Understands size concepts (<i>big</i> and <i>little</i>)</li> <li>• Understands the concept of <i>one</i> (e.g., “Give me one block” or “Get one cup.”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitates two numbers or unrelated words</li> <li>• Uses three-word phrases frequently</li> <li>• Uses action words (e.g., <i>sit, eat, cry, sleep, kick, throw, roll</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses <i>t, n, k, g, p, m, h</i> at the beginning of words or syllables</li> <li>• Uses <i>n, p, m</i> at the end of words or syllables</li> <li>• Correctly produces vowel sounds</li> </ul>
27–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matches shapes and colors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to simple questions (e.g., “Where’s Mommy?” when in the same room; “What do you drink?” when playing with baby and dishes)</li> <li>• Understands two prepositions/location phrases, such as <i>on, in, by, under</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Names one color</li> <li>• Refers to self by pronouns consistently (<i>I, me, my</i>)</li> <li>• Uses two sentence types (declarative sentences like “Dog eat” or “Give me cookie” and asks questions like “Mommy go?” or “Bye bye?”)</li> <li>• Uses past tense (regular or irregular forms like <i>jumped, stopped, ate, sat</i>)</li> <li>• Uses negation (<i>no, not, don’t</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses <i>d, f, y</i> at the beginning of words or syllables</li> <li>• Uses <i>s, d, k, f, ng</i> at the end of words or syllables</li> </ul>
30–33 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sorts shapes (e.g., puts circles with other circles, squares with other squares)</li> <li>• Stacks rings in correct order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows two-step unrelated commands (e.g., “Give the dog a bone and bring me the book.”)</li> <li>• Understands the concept <i>all</i></li> <li>• Answers <i>yes/no</i> questions correctly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answers questions with “yes” and “no”</li> <li>• Uses plurals</li> <li>• Uses prepositions</li> <li>• States gender</li> <li>• Says first and last names</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses <i>w</i> at the beginning of words or syllables</li> <li>• Uses <i>t, r, b</i> at the end of words or syllables</li> </ul>
33–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plays house</li> <li>• Sorts colors (e.g., puts red block with other red item, blue block with other blue item)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows three-step unrelated commands (e.g., “Get your ball, Give baby a drink,” and “Push the car.”)</li> <li>• Answers <i>wh-</i> questions</li> <li>• Identifies parts of objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses verb form <i>-ing</i></li> <li>• Asks <i>wh-</i> questions, including <i>what, who,</i> and <i>where</i></li> <li>• Talks in sentences 3–5 words in length</li> <li>• Counts to 3</li> <li>• Recites some nursery rhymes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses <i>s</i> at the beginning of words or syllables</li> <li>• Uses <i>l</i> and <i>g</i> at the end of words or syllables</li> <li>• Says all syllables in a multisyllabic word</li> </ul>