



Speech & Language Checklist for Children Development (Sources: US CDC, UK NHS and others)

The discussion is for information purpose only and should never be used for diagnosis. Please consult a certified medical professional for diagnosis.

By 12 months

Newborn to 12 months - Listens and responds to voice and other sounds • Tells feelings by cooing, gurgling, smiling and crying • Vowels will predominate, but they will begin to vocalize with 2 syllables • Turns to your voice and other sounds • Begins to respond to own name • Laughs or squeaks; babbles a series of syllables • Varies volume, rate, and pitch by playing with sounds • Cognitively, the child begins to play; visually follows a vanishing object; inspects objects; reaches to grab a dropped object • Recognizes family members, pays attention to music or singing, looks at named pictures with an adult • Obeys some commands, especially if accompanied by visual cues (e.g., bye-bye), begins two-syllable sentence-like jargon

12 months - Starting to understand simple commands (the word “no”, for example) • Can recognize their own name and familiar sounds • Can understand the names of familiar objects and people • Beginning to produce a few basic words between 12-18 months of age • Making babbling sounds that imitate speech • Uses body language and vocalizations (to get attention, for example) • Says first word at around 12 months • Repeats sounds

By 24 months

• Speech can be understood 50 percent of the time • Producing the sounds m, n, h, and beginning to use some others • Can say more than 50 words • Producing some two-word combinations (bye mummy, for example) • Understands simple two-part sentences and directions • Uses words more often than gestures to communicate • Beginning to use language with peers

By 3 years

• Speech can be understood 75 percent of the time • Producing the sounds p, w, d, g, k • Can follow familiar directions and understand ‘wh-questions (who, what, when, where, why) • Understands basic location concepts such as ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘under’, and other descriptive words such as ‘hot’, ‘big’, ‘soft’ • Uses negatives (for example ‘no’, ‘not’, ‘don’t’, ‘can’t’) • Uses three-to-four-word sentences in a simple conversation • Starts using words that end in -ing such as “walking”, “drinking”, and “playing” • Answers simple questions

By 5 years

Four years - Some speech errors are expected, but they can generally be understood in conversation • Producing the sounds j, ch, t, b, l, s, y, f, sh • Understands the names of basic shapes and colours • Strong use of language during play to communicate with peers • Asks ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions • Can answer ‘why’ questions • Large vocabulary and able to produce four-to-five-word sentences • Uses basic grammar, with some mistakes expected (eg ‘I falled down’)

Five years - Speech can be understood almost all the time • Beginning to produce the sound r (still may have difficulty with z, th, v) • Understands opposites (eg big/small, wet/dry) • Uses longer sentences (approximately 6-8 words) with mostly correct grammar • Uses correct forms of verbs to talk about present, past and future tense • Explains ‘why’ things happen (eg ___because ___) • Follows more complex, three-stage directions • Expresses how they feel and explains events and occurrences • Describes objects in details • Uses imagination to create stories • Understands some concept of time • Understand relationships between objects, such as “the girl who is playing ball” and “the boy who is jumping rope.”