



SPEECH & LANGUAGE MILESTONES BIRTH-5

WHAT IS SPEECH & LANGUAGE?

"Speech" can be thought of as verbal communication. It is the set of sounds that we make (using our voice & our articulators) that comprise syllables, words, & sentences. Speech alone carries no meaning; it is merely different sounds.

There are three main components of speech:

- Articulation (how we make each sound)
- Voicing (using our "vocal cords")
- Fluency (intonation and rhythm)



"Language" encompasses how we use speech to formulate sentences in order to communicate. Language also consists of three parts: expressive (the words & sentences we produce), receptive (what we understand) & pragmatics (social communication or the rules of communication).



SPEECH & LANGUAGE MILESTONES BIRTH-1

SPEECH MILESTONES:

- Produces cooing going sounds by 3 months
- Begins to babble around 6 months (example)
- Vocalizes p, b, m sounds
- Begins to imitate sounds (e.g., "ba ba")



LANGUAGE MILESTONES:

- Turns toward sounds
- Responds to "no"
- Cries differently for wants & needs
- Recognizes own name & family members names
- Uses gestures to communicate (e.g., reaching arms in response to "up" or waving to others)
- Begins to say "mama" or "dada" (first words usually around 12 months)
- Starts to respond to requests (e.g., "want more?" or "want up?")

SPEECH & LANGUAGE MILESTONES 1-2 YEARS

SPEECH MILESTONES:

- Around two years, child begins to use different combinations of vowels & consonants
- Speech is mostly understood by familiar people & caregivers
- Many words contain only a consonant & vowel (e.g., "do" for "dog")



LANGUAGE MILESTONES:

- Combines 2-word phrases (e.g., "more juice")
- Uses more than 50 words, understands more than 300 words
- Follows 1-step directions (e.g., "get the ball")
- Answers yes/no questions (e.g., "are you a boy?")
- Often uses gestures (e.g., pointing, reaching)



SPEECH & LANGUAGE MILESTONES 2-3 YEARS

SPEECH MILESTONES:

- Sounds: p, b, m, n, w, h, t, d, k, g, ng (-ing sound), y are typically mastered
- Speech should be 50-75% understood by an unfamiliar listener

LANGUAGE MILESTONES:

- Combines 3-word phrases (e.g., "I want juice")
- Starts to understand differences between opposites (e.g., big/little, go/stop, up/down)
- Begins to follow simple 2-step directions (e.g., "get your shoes and give them to Dad")
- Begins to name objects when requesting
- Answers simple "wh"-questions (e.g., "what is this?")



SPEECH & LANGUAGE MILESTONES 3-5 YEARS

SPEECH MILESTONES:

- By age 3-3 1/2
 - 75% intelligible to unfamiliar listeners
 - Should produce: m, n, h, w, p, t, k, b, d, g, f, y (as in yes), tw- (as in twin), kw- (as in quick) & most vowel sounds
- By age 4-4 1/2
 - 100% intelligible to unfamiliar listeners, may have pronunciation errors
 - Should produce: v, j (as in jump or giant), gl- (as in glow)
- By age 5-5 1/2
 - 100% intelligible to unfamiliar listeners, may have pronunciation errors
 - Should produce: s, "sh," "th" (as in they) sp-, st-, sk-, sm-, sn-, sw-, bl-, pl-, kl- (as in clap), fl-, tr-, kr- (as in cracker)
- Common Sound errors that may continue to present at age 6, such as:
 - r, l, z, "th" (as in think), "ch" (as in check)



LANGUAGE MILESTONES:

- Follows 3-step directions (e.g., "put your toy on the table, get your coat, and come here!")
- Begins to use 4 or more words in a sentence (e.g., describing day at school)
- Answers more complicated "wh"-questions (e.g., "why is he at the doctor?")
- Uses more correct grammar when speaking (e.g., plurals, past tense, pronouns)
- Starts to recognize letters & numbers



RED FLAGS

BY AGE 1, CHILD CANNOT:

- ▶ Respond to his/her name
- ▶ Begin verbalizing first words
- ▶ No eye contact

BY AGE 2, CHILD CANNOT:

- ▶ Begin combining two-word phrases (24 months)
- ▶ Child does not consistently add new words to expressive vocabulary
- ▶ Child does not follow simple instructions
- ▶ Child presents with limited play skills



BY AGES 3-5, CHILD CANNOT:

- ▶ Verbalize utterances without repeating parts of words or prolonging sounds (e.g., "m-m-m-my mother," "ssssssister")
- ▶ Seem to find the right words, describe an item or event without difficulty
- ▶ Begin combining four to five-word sentences
- ▶ Be understood by both familiar & unfamiliar listeners
- ▶ Repeat themselves to clarify without frustration
- ▶ Correctly produce vowels & majority of speech sounds (closer to 5 years old)
- ▶ Child does not ask or answer simple questions
- ▶ Child uses rote phrases & sentences
- ▶ Child prefers to play alone than with peers

WHO CAN HELP (WHAT IS A SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST)

Speech –Language Pathologists (SLPs) can help! SLPs are all master's-level educated individuals working to help children & adults improve communication. SLPs complete a variety of coursework & clinical placements prior to treating clients.

SLPs are licensed both by the state in which they practice & the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) to work with individuals of varying needs & diagnoses in the areas of: receptive, expressive, and pragmatic language, articulation and phonology, fluency, voice, feeding and swallowing.

SLPs typically work in clinics, schools, hospitals, or nursing homes.



HOW TO ENCOURAGE SPEECH & LANGUAGE

Communicative temptation: create situations where a child needs to gesture, vocalize, or verbalize to have his or her needs met before giving desired object (e.g., puzzle pieces)

Imitation: having a child imitate you helps him or her to produce words & sounds at appropriate times (e.g., saying "hi" to animal toys as you take them out of the box)

Expanding: using a child's language and expanding it to make it more complex (e.g., child says "ball," adult can say, "that is your ball!")

Build vocabulary: target and explain relevant new words (e.g., seasonal words) to help build vocabulary

Read aloud: emphasize & reinforce new words, ask questions about the story while reading, ask child to retell the story (if age appropriate)

Ask questions: posing questions about daily activities are a great way to encourage language skills, including naming & understanding functions.

Narrate everything: modeling your own speech and language can increase exposure to correct production & enhance a child's abilities

For more information on Speech & Language Development including videos, checklists, webinars and answers to your questions visit:

www.SpeechandLanguageInfographic.com

Rosetti, L. (2006). The Rosetti Infant-Toddler Language Scale. LinguSystems, Inc. Typical speech & language development. Retrieved from <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/>

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