



NORMAL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Use this as a guide, as children learn to communicate at different rates. Please see your GP or Early Childhood Nurse if concerned.

0-3 Months

- Responds to loud voices and sounds, e.g. door slam, phone.
- Develops eye contact skills (looking at a face or following a moving object with their eyes).
- Has different cries to let you know about pain, hunger, tiredness.
- Begins to coo, e.g. “ah ah, ooh ooh”, and gurgles.
- Smiles when you talk to them (4-6 weeks).
- Develops turn taking skills, e.g. may copy you when you make a sound.

3-6 Months

- Turns their head to a range of noises or sounds, e.g. someone walking through the door.
- At 3 months – coos more and uses more grunts and gurgles.
- Smiles more and laughs during play.

6-9 Months

- At 6 months – starts to babble e.g. “da da”, “ba ba”, “ada”.
- Turns when their name is called and understands when you say “no”.
- Copies simple actions, e.g. waving goodbye, clapping.
- Uses more babbling and sounds together, e.g. “mamama”, “dadada”.
- Uses more gestures, e.g. shaking their head to say “no”.



9-12 Months

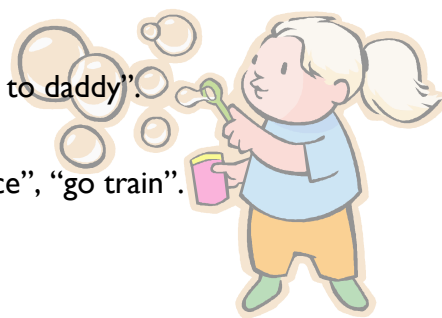
- Understands simple questions, e.g. “Where’s daddy?”
- Follows simple directions with help, e.g. “Give ball to mummy”.
- Uses many different speech sounds together, e.g. “brmm brmm”, “dabadabadaba”.
- Begins to point and makes sounds to indicate needs and wants.

12-18 Months

- Knows at least one body part, e.g. nose.
- Understands many words, simple directions and yes/no questions, e.g. “Do you want a drink?”.
- Begins to use single words (about 12 to 20).
- Copies noises, e.g. animal or transport noises.

18-24 Months

- Knows more body parts.
- Understands longer instructions, e.g. “Pick up the car...give it to daddy”.
- Uses 25 to 50 single words.
- Starts to put 2 words together, e.g. “daddy car”, “mummy juice”, “go train”.



2 Years

- Uses between 50 and 200 words regularly .
- Starts to put more 2-3 word phrases together e.g. “more juice”, “daddy go car”, “mummy up”.
- Answers simple questions such as “What’s that?”, “Where is doggy?”.
- Follows simple instructions with two key words, e.g. “put the **apple** in the **bag**”.

3 Years

- Understands different words, e.g. place words e.g. “in”, “on”, “under”.
- Identifies objects by their use, colour or shape, e.g. “What colour is the big ball?”.
- Uses 3 to 5 words in a sentence, e.g. “dolly go sleep now”.
- Asks questions, e.g. “What?”, “Who?”, “Where?”.
- Uses clear speech about 75% of the time (sounds are still developing).
- Uses more grammatical structures, though not all sentences are correct, such as:
 - “-ing” (present tense), e.g. “Mummy walking”.
 - plurals (more than one), e.g. “two balls”.

4 Years

- Uses a lot of words (about 900), with around 4 or more words in a sentence.
- Understands “time” concepts, e.g. yesterday; winter; last week.
- Only has occasional grammatical errors, but generally uses correct grammar.
- Can be understood most of the time – has learnt most speech sounds.

5 Years

- Can follow directions with 3 parts, e.g. “stand up, put on your shoes and go to the car”.
- Uses sentences of around 6 or more words with correct grammar.
- Talks about past, current and future events, e.g. “We’re going to the park tomorrow!”.
- Understands many types of concepts, e.g. wet, dry, big, little, slow, fast.
- Talks about feelings and tells you their ideas, e.g. “I’m sad – Jack wouldn’t play with me”.
- Is understood by familiar people **and** strangers.