

# AN INTRODUCTION TO SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT



Speech and language are the skills we use to communicate with others. Speech and language milestones help tell whether a child is developing as expected.

Milestones are certain skills, such as babbling, saying "mama" or "dada," or putting two words together. Usually, a child needs to master one milestone before reaching the next.



## Two Types of Communication Skills

From birth baby begins to develop the two communication skills they will continue to build on and use throughout their life

Receptive communication is the ability to receive and understand a message from another person. Baby demonstrates this skill by turning their head towards your voice and responding to simple directions.



Expressive communication is the ability to convey a message to another person through sounds, speech signs, or writing. Crying, babbling, and using body language are examples of baby's early expressive skills



## Why do speech and language problems develop in some children?

A child may have a language delay because of trouble hearing or because of a developmental disorder such as pre-term babies, autism, CP etc.

It's important to track your child's speech and language development. A child can overcome many speech and language problems with intervention, especially when you catch problems early.





# SPEECH AND LANGUAGE CHECKLIST

	SPEECH AND LANGUAGE	HEARING AND UNDERSTANDING		SPEECH AND LANGUAGE	HEARING AND UNDERSTANDING
<b>3 Months</b>	Makes eye contact Cries differently for different needs, e.g. hungry vs. tired Coos and smiles	Turns head toward sound or voice. Quiets or smiles in response to sound or voice Shows interest in faces	<b>18 Months</b>	Repeats words overheard in conversation. Responds to questions. Continues to produce speech-like babbling	Points at familiar objects and people in pictures. Understands "in" and "on" Responds to yes/no questions with head nod
<b>6 Months</b>	Begins to use consonant sounds in babbling, e.g. "da, da, da". Makes different kinds of sounds to express feelings. Uses babbling to get attention	Listens and responds when spoken to. Reacts to sudden noises or sounds. Notices toys that make sounds	<b>21 Months</b>	Uses at least 50 words. Consistently imitates new words. Names objects and pictures	Understands simple pronouns (me, you, my) Understands new words quickly. Identifies 3-5 body parts when named
<b>9 Months</b>	Imitates sounds. Uses Increased variety of sounds and syllable combinations in babbling. Participates in two-way communication	Recognizes sound of their name. Looks at familiar objects and people when named. Follows some routine commands with gestures	<b>24 Months</b>	Uses gestures and words during pretend play. Begins to use 2-word phrases. Uses simple pronouns (me, you, my)	Understands action words. Follows 2-step related directions, e.g. "Pick up your coat and bring it to me." Enjoys listening to stories
<b>12 Months</b>	Meaningfully uses "mama" or "dada". Imitates speech sounds. Babbling has sounds and rhythms of speech	Responds to "no" & to simple directions-"come here. Pays attention to where you are looking and pointing	<b>30 Months</b>	Consistently uses 2-3 word phrases. Uses "in" and "on". At least 50% of speech is understood by caregiver	Follows 2-step unrelated directions, e.g. "Give me the ball and go get your coat." Understands "mine" and "yours"
<b>15 Months</b>	May use 5-10 words. Imitates simple words and actions. Combines sounds and gestures	Consistently follows simple directions. Shows interest in pictures. Can identify 1-2 body parts when named	<b>36 Months</b>	Asks "what" and "where" questions. Uses plurals, e.g. "dogs". Most speech is understood by caregiver	Understands most simple sentences. Simple understanding of concepts including color, space, time. Understands "why" questions



# Tips for Encouraging Speech and Language Development

1. Use a high-pitched, sing-song voice. This helps get and keep your baby's attention while you talk.
2. Play with sounds. Get silly while playing and make sounds that connect with what your child is doing.
3. Use facial expressions and gestures to communicate the meaning of words.
4. Describe your actions as you dress, feed, and bathe your child. Pairing the same words with routine activities is a great way to develop language.
5. Encourage two-way communication. When your child communicates with you using sounds, words, or gestures, be sure to respond and take turns in "conversation."
6. Read with your child. "Reading" can simply mean describing pictures without following the written words. Choose books with large, colorful pictures, and encourage your child to point to and name familiar objects.
7. Expand your child's vocabulary by building on the words they already know. For example, if your child says "dog," you could say "Yes, that's a big dog!"
8. Reword your child's phrases. If your child makes a speech or language error, respond with their phrase in the correct form. This helps them learn proper pronunciation and grammar. For example, if your child says "Doggy big," you can respond with "Yes, the doggy is big."

## Do's & Don'ts

**Do** let your child direct their play



**Do** play with your child in different ways



**Do** encourage playing with other children



**Do** ask your child questions



**Do** be silly!

