



# SPEECH & LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

## BIRTH → 6 MONTHS

- Startles at loud sounds and notices toys that make sounds
- Cries for change in different needs
- Demonstrates cooing/babbling
- Moves eyes in direction of sounds
- Responds to changes in your tone of voice
- Smiles and laughs

## 6 MONTHS → 1 YEAR

- Begins to imitate gestures (bye-bye, reaching for up, shaking head no)
- Looks when you point to something and responds to facial expressions
- Uses some words (mama, da-da, hi) by one year
- Increasing understanding of daily routines
- Continues to babble long strings of sounds during play
- Plays games such as peek-a-boo, pattycake or dropping toys from high chair

## 1 YEAR → 18 MONTHS

- **Receptive Language**
  - Understands names of familiar objects and people
  - Understands action words and simple directions (come here)
  - Begins to show simple body parts on request
  - Responds to name
- **Expressive Language**
  - Uses 10–14 words
  - Uses words and gestures (pointing) to request
- **Articulation**
  - Uses many vowels and a variety of consonant sounds (b, t, d, m, n, h, w)
  - Combines consonants and vowels into one- and two-syllable sequences (doggie, baby, mommy)
- **Play**
  - Uses objects appropriately (rolls toy car, throws ball)





## 18 MONTHS → 2 YEARS

- **Receptive Language**
  - Follows simple commands (get shoes)
  - Retrieves objects upon request
  - Increase in understanding of vocabulary
- **Expressive Language**
  - Experiencing a burst of language (new words every day)
  - Uses 200 words by age two
  - Uses words to request, protest, label, respond and socialize
- **Articulation**
  - By age two, is using sounds: p, b, m, n, t, d, h, w
- **Play**
  - Manipulates mechanical toys (dump truck, busy box)
  - Initiates housework or other adult activities

## 2 YEARS → 3 YEARS

- **Receptive Language**
  - Understands 1200 words (approximately)
  - Follows simple one- and two-step related directions (get the napkin, throw it away)
  - Answers "what" and "where" questions by pointing or using words
- **Expressive Language**
  - Has a word for almost everything
  - Uses words like in, on and under
  - Combines words into two- and three-word phrases (more milk, help me please)
- **Articulation**
  - Speech is more clear and 50 to 80% intelligible by age three
  - By age three is using sounds: p, b, m, n, t, d, h, w, y, k, g, f
- **Play**
  - Engages in pretend play with objects (feeds doll a bottle)
  - Pretends to be another person (plays "mommy" or "doctor")





## 3 YEARS → 4 YEARS

- **Receptive Language**
  - Follows two- and three-step directions
  - Responds consistently to directions and requests
- **Expressive Language**
  - Consistently uses sentences of three to four words in length
  - Uses more adult grammar and initiates and maintains short conversations
- **Articulation**
  - 80 to 90% intelligible to unfamiliar listeners by age four
  - By age four is using sounds: p, b, m, n, t, d, h, w, y, k, g, f, l, v, s, z, ch, sh, j
- **Play**
  - Plays with another child for a short period of time, can share briefly back and forth
  - Beginning to engage in dramatic play

## 4 YEARS → 5 YEARS

- **Receptive Language**
  - Understands most questions (who, what, where, why)
  - Can follow complex directions and understands basic preschool concepts
- **Expressive Language**
  - Uses sentences with more adult grammar and over six words
  - Asks questions and can keep a conversation going
- **Articulation**
  - At least 90% intelligible to unfamiliar listeners
  - By age five is using all sounds listed at four years plus r, zh, th (voiced)
- **Play**
  - Plays in groups using interactional play and chooses friends

## 5 YEARS → 6 YEARS

- **Receptive Language**
  - Uses conjoined, elaborated sentences and relates stories in sequence
  - Uses adult grammar and is conventional
- **Articulation**
  - Uses all sounds correctly in conversation

