

Speech and Language Milestones

HEARING AND UNDERSTANDING

Birth-3 Months

- Startles to loud sounds.
- Quiets or smiles when spoken to.
- Seems to recognize your voice and quiets if crying.
- Increases or decreases sucking behavior in response to sound.

4-6 Months

- Moves eyes in direction of sounds.
- Responds to changes in tone of your voice.
- Notices toys that make sounds.
- Pays attention to music.

7 Months-1 Year

- Enjoys games like peek-o-boo and pat-a-cake.
- Turns and looks in direction of sounds.
- Listens when spoken to.
- Recognizes words for common items like “cup”, “shoe”, “juice”.
- Begins to respond to requests (“Come here”, “Want more?”).

1-2 Years

- Points to a few body parts when asked.
- Follows simple commands and understands simple questions (“Roll the ball”, “Kiss the baby”, “Where’s your shoe?”).
- Listens to simple stories, songs, and rhymes.
- Points to pictures in a book when named.

2-3 Years

- Understands differences in meaning (“go-stop”, “in-on”, “big-little”, “up-down”).
- Follows two requests (“Get the book and put it on the table”).

3-4 Years

- Hears you when call from another room.
- Hears television or radio at the same loudness level as other family members.
- Understands simple, “who?”, “what?”, “where?”, “why?” questions.

4-5 Years

- Pays attention to a short story and answers simple questions about it.
- Hears and understands most of what is said at home and in school.
- Often asks for or directs attention to objects by naming them.

TALKING

Birth-3 Months

- Makes pleasure sounds (cooing, gooing).
- Cries differently for different needs.
- Smiles when sees you.

4-6 Months

- Babbling sounds more speech-like with many different sounds, including p, b, and m.
- Vocalizes excitement and displeasure.
- Makes gurgling sounds when left alone and when playing with you.

7 Months-1 Year

- Babbling has both long and short groups of sounds such as “tata upup bibibibi.”
- Uses speech or non-crying sounds to get and keep attention.
- Imitates different speech sounds.
- Has 1 or 2 words (bye-bye, dada, mama) although they may not be clear.

1-2 Years

- Says more words every month.
- Uses some 1-2 word questions (“Where kitty?”, “Go bye-bye?”, “What’s that?”).
- Puts 2 words together (“more cookie”, “no juice”, “mommy book”).
- Uses many different consonant sounds of the beginning of words.

2-3 Years

- Has a word for almost everything.
- Uses 2-3-word “sentences” to talk about and ask for things.
- Speech is understood by familiar listeners most of the time.
- Often asks for or directs attention to objects by naming them.

3-4 Years

- Talks about activities at school or at friends’ homes.
- People outside family usually understand child’s speech.
- Uses a lot of sentences that have 4 or more words.
- Usually talks easily without repeating syllables or words.

4-5 Years

- Voice sounds clear like other children’s.
- Uses sentences that give lots of details (e.g. “I like to read my books”).
- Tells stories that stick to topic.
- Communicates easily with other children and adults.
- Says most sounds correctly except a few like l, s, r, v, z, ch, sh, th.
- Uses the same grammar as the rest of the family.

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