

A CHILD'S "LANGUAGE" DEVELOPMENT RELATES TO TWO AREAS:

- **Receptive Language:** comprehension of spoken language, such as understanding words, questions, concepts and instructions

- **Expressive Language:** using words to get a message across, such as using a range of vocabulary, using grammar, putting words in the right order in a sentence, using sentences for story telling.

Even though children vary in their development of language, there are certain 'milestones' that can be identified as a rough guide to normal development. Typically, these skills must be reached at certain ages before more complex skills can be learned. These milestones are listed below as a guide:

LANGUAGE MILESTONES

6– 12 month old child

At age 6 months, your child.....

- Makes lots of different, playful sounds (called babbling)
- Babbles for attention
- Turns and looks at new sounds

At age 8 months, your child....

- Responds to their name
- Produces four or more different sounds
- Frequently uses syllables such as ba, da, ka
- Tries to imitate sounds

At age 10 months, your child.....

May say "mama" and "dada"

- Shouts to attract attention
- Uses jargon (babbling that sounds like real speech)
- Plays Peek-a-Boo

At age 12 months, your child....

- Recognises their name
- Points at objects for you to get or name
- Says 2 to 3 words besides "mama" and "dada"
- Imitates familiar words
- Understands simple instructions eg. "give it to dolly"

12 – 18 months

From 12 to 18 months of age, your child....

- Recognises his or her name
- Understands "no"
- Understands simple instructions
- Points and gestures to call attention to an event or to show what they want
- Imitates familiar words
- Waves good-bye
- Uses "mama", "dad" and several other words, usually nouns
- Practices words
- Likes to make the sounds of familiar animals and things
- Gives a toy on request
- Attempts to communicate by mixing jargon with real words



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2 years old

At age 2 years, your child....

- Understands simple questions and commands
- Identifies body parts
- Uses mainly the names of things, actions, people in his/her language
- Carries on “conversation” with self and dolls
- Asks “what’s this?”, “what’s that?”, and “where’s my...?”
- Uses sentences of 2 to 3 words
- Refers to self by their name
- Uses 2-word negative phrases such as “not go”, “no want”
- Uses plurals by adding “s” (such as books, horses)
- Has around 200 words in their speaking vocabulary
- Listens to stories and points to pictures when asked

3 years old

At age 3 years, your child....

- Knows the words “night” and “day”
- Uses contractions such as “it’s” or “there’s”
- Begins to understand instructions that contain a ‘location’, eg. “put the block under the chair”
- Uses sentences to talk about events, observations, ideas and relationships
- Knows his/her name, gender, and several nursery rhymes
- Tells simple stories
- Uses sentences of 3 to 4 words
- Has nearly 1000 words in their speaking vocabulary
- Asks “what” questions frequently

4 years old

At age 4 years, your child....

- Points to colours red, blue, yellow, and green
- Identifies crosses, triangles, circles and squares
- Can speak of imaginary conditions such as “suppose that....” Or “I hope that....”
- Asks many questions but is more interested in how answer fit his/her own thoughts than in the explanation
- Uses sentences of 4 to 5 words
- Asks “who” and “why” questions
- Begins to combine sentences with “and”
- Uses past tense correctly

5 years old

At age 5 years, your child....

- Defines objects by their use eg. “you sit on a chair” and can tell what objects are made of
- Knows words for spatial relations such as “on top”, “behind”, “far”, “near”, “over”
- Uses sentences of 5 to 6 words
- Knows common opposites such as ‘big and little’, ‘hard and soft’
- Understands the words ‘same’ and ‘different’
- Tells a story with a simple plot (problem, action to solve the problem, and outcome)
- Uses future, present and past tenses
- Asks a range of questions to get information
- Uses a wide variety of complex sentences, eg. “I can go outside when I put my coat on”



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