



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE MILESTONES

Speech and language development is one of the most critical school readiness skills.
Early identification is key: don't wait!

By 6 months

- Turns eyes or head toward a sound
- Watches your face when you speak
- Smiles & laughs in response to your smiles & laughs
- Makes sounds and/or moves body in response to you

By 9 months

- Responds to his/her name
- Babbles e.g. bababa, dadada
- Enjoys playing social games with you e.g. peek-a-boo

By 12 months

- Follows simple 1 step directions e.g., "sit down"
- Gives familiar items on verbal request
- Points to things he/she wants
- Uses gestures e.g. waving "bye-bye"
- Looks across the room to something you point to
- Gets your attention using sounds, and gestures while looking at your eyes

By 18 months

- Identifies several body parts when asked
- Understands the concepts of "in/out", "off/on"
- Points to pictures using one finger
- Uses about 20 words consistently to communicate
- Uses at least 4 consonant sounds e.g., p, b, m, n, d, g, w, h
- Pretends to feed a doll/teddy or pretends a bowl is a hat

By 2 years

- Follows 2 step directions
e.g. "go find your teddy & show it to grandma"
- Uses at least 100 words including action words
e.g. fall, eat, go
- Combines at least 2 words e.g. daddy sleep
- Enjoys being with other children
- Puts 2 pretend play actions together
e.g. stirring food and feeding a doll

By 3 years

- Understands who, what, where, and why questions
- Can create long sentences combining at least 5 words
- Uses some adult grammar e.g. mommy's coat, I jumped
- Can have a short conversation
- Speech is understood at least 75% of the time
- Pretends with friends using many actions
e.g. having a tea party

By 4 years

- Follows 3 part directions
e.g. "get some paper, draw a picture, & give to mommy"
- Uses sentences with adult-type grammar
e.g. "he's going to the park now"
- Tells a story
- Speech is understood by strangers most of the time
- Can act out different roles with their friends
e.g. going to a restaurant

Adapted from Ontario Ministry of Children & Youth Services, 2007