

Language Milestones & Red Flags

Contact your pediatrician if you have any concerns about your child's speech or language.

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Hearing & Understanding

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Talking, Gesturing & Signing

3-4 YEARS

- Responds when called.
- Understands words for some colors, like red, blue, and green.
- Understands words for some shapes, like circle and square.
- Understands words for family, like brother, grandmother, and aunt.
- Takes turns and plays cooperatively.
- Shows frustration if not understood.
- Begins to pay attention to specific print (i.e. the first letter of name).
- Participates in rhyming games.

- By 4 years uses 1,600 words.
- Answers simple who, what, and where questions.
- Uses pronouns, (I, you, me, we, they).
- Most people understand them.
- Asks when and how questions.
- Puts 4 words together. May make mistakes, like "I goed"
- Talks about what happened during the day and relates personal stories.
- Uses regular (-ed) and irregular (ate) past tense verb.
- Expresses ideas and feelings.

4-5 YEARS

- Understands words for order, like first, next, and last.
- Understands words for time, like yesterday, today, and tomorrow.
- Follows 3+ step directions, like "Put your pajamas on, brush your teeth, and then pick out a book."
- Hears and understands most of what she hears at home and in school.
- Understands comparatives and superlatives (big, bigger, biggest)

- By 5 years uses 2,200 words
- Says all speech sounds in words (May make mistakes on some sounds)
- Talks without repeating sounds or words most of the time.
- Names letters and numbers.
- Tells a short story.
- Keeps a conversation going.
- Uses language to resolves disputes.
- Speaks of imaginary conditions ("What if...")

5-6 YEARS

- Asks the meaning of words.
- Likes to complete projects.
- Asks questions for information.
- Understands number concepts up to 20.
- Takes more care in communicating with an unfamiliar person.
- Recognizes letter to sound matches.
- Understands left vs right.
- Understands passive sentences.
- Tells opposites.
- Names days of the week.

- By 6 years uses around 6,000 words.
- Repeats sentences up to 9 words in length.
- Speech should be over 90% intelligible
- Should be using all advanced pronouns (yourself, their, theirs, ourselves, themselves, etc.)
- Uses threats and promises.
- Explains how things are the same or different.
- Communicates actively in group activities.