



Speech and Language Milestones

The skills listed below mark children's progress as they learn to communicate and gain speech and language abilities. If children are not meeting one or more of these milestones, please contact **SoundStart**, the Lambton County Preschool Speech and Language Program.

By 6 months

- Orients to sounds
- Startles in response to loud noises
- Makes different cries for different needs (i.e. hungry, tired)
- Watches your face as you talk
- Smiles/laughs in response to your smiles and laughs
- Imitates coughs or other sounds (e.g. "ah", "eh", "buh")

By 9 months

- Responds to his/her name
- Responds to the telephone ringing or a knock at the door
- Understands being told "no"
- Gets what s/he wants through gestures (e.g. reaching to be picked up)
- Plays social games with you (e.g. "Peek-A-Boo")
- Enjoys being around people
- Babbles and repeats sounds such as "babababa" or "duhduhduh"

By 12 months

- Follows simple one-step directions (e.g. "sit down")
- Looks across the room to a toy when adult points at it
- Consistently uses 3 to 5 words
- Uses gestures to communicate (e.g. waves hi/bye, shakes head "no")
- Gets your attention using sounds, gestures and pointing while looking at your eyes
- Brings you toys to show you
- "Performs" for social attention and praise
- Combines lots of sounds together as though talking (e.g. "abada baduh abee")
- Shows an interest in simple picture books

By 18 months

- Understands the concepts of "in & out", "off & on"
- Points to several body parts when asked
- Uses at least 20 words consistently
- Responds with words or gestures to simple questions (e.g. "Where's teddy?", "What's that?")
- Demonstrates some pretend play with toys (e.g. gives teddy a drink, pretends a bowl is a hat)
- Makes at least 4 different consonant sounds (e.g. p, b, m, n, d, g, w, h)
- Enjoys being read to and sharing simple books with you
- Points to pictures using one finger

By 24 months

- Follows two-step directions (e.g. "Go find your teddy bear and show it to Grandma")
- Uses 100-150 words
- Uses at least two pronouns (e.g. "you", "me", "mine")
- Consistently combines 2 to 4 words in short phrases (e.g. "Daddy hat", "truck go down")
- Enjoys being around other children
- Begins to offer toys to peers and imitate other children's actions and words
- Words are understood by others 50% to 60% of the time
- Forms words/sounds easily and effortlessly
- Holds books the right way up and turns pages
- "Reads" to stuffed animals or toys
- Scribbles with crayons

By 30 months

- Understands the concepts of size (big/little) and quantity (a little/a lot, more)
- Uses some adult grammar (e.g. "two cookies", "bird flying", "I jumped")
- Uses over 350 words
- Uses action words (e.g. run, spill, fall)
- Begins taking short turns with peers, using both words and toys
- Demonstrates concern when another child is hurt/sad
- Combines several actions in play (e.g. feeds doll and then puts her to sleep, puts blocks in train then drives train, drops blocks off)
- Puts sounds at the start of most words
- Produces words with two or more syllables or beats (e.g. "ba-na-na", "com-pu-ter", "a-pple")
- Recognizes familiar logos and signs involving print (e.g. golden arches of McDonalds, "Stop" sign)
- Remembers and understands familiar stories

By 36 months

- Understands "who", "what", "where" and "why" questions
- Creates long sentences (e.g. using 5 to 8 words)
- Talks about past events (e.g. trip to Grandparents' house, day at childcare)
- Tells simple stories
- Shows affection for favourite playmates
- Engages in multi-step pretend play (e.g. pretending to cook a meal, repair a car, etc.)
- Understood by most people outside of the family most of the time
- Aware of the function of print (e.g. in menus, lists, signs)
- Beginning interest in, and awareness of, rhyming

By 48 months

- Follows directions involving 3 or more steps (e.g. "First get some paper, then draw a picture, last give it to Mom")
- Uses adult-type grammar
- Tells stories with a clear beginning, middle and end
- Talks to try to solve problems with adults and other children
- Demonstrates increasingly complex imaginative play
- Understood by strangers almost all of the time
- Able to generate simple rhymes (e.g. "cat-bat")
- Matches some letters with their sounds (e.g. "letter T says 'tuh'")

By 60 months

- Follows group directions (e.g. "All the boys get a toy")
- Understands directions involving "if...then" (e.g. "If you're wearing runners, then line up for gym")
- Describes past, present and future events in detail
- Seeks to please his/her friends
- Shows increasing independence in friendships (e.g. may visit neighbour by him/herself)
- Uses almost all of the sounds of their language with few to no errors
- Knows all the letters of the alphabet
- Identifies the sounds at the beginning of some words (e.g. "Pop starts with the 'puh' sound")