

Expressive Language Development

Age In Months	Language Behavior	Normative Source
6	Vocalizes to toys; vocalizes for social contact.	Gesell
7	Combines vowel sounds; says a-a-aa when cries; vocalizes recognition of familiar people.	Gesell
8	Says “da-da” or “ma-ma” in babbling but not with reference to parents; babbling acquires inflection.	Van Riper
10	Vocalizes “ma-ma” and “da-da” and has one other “word”; imitates sounds such as cough or tongue click.	Meacham/Gesell
12	Echolalia: Imitates a number of syllables as well as sounds. Vocalizes two “words” other than “ma-ma” and “da-da”.	Van Riper
12 - 14	Accompanies gestures by vocalization, e.g., babbles while pointing. Spontaneously tries to imitate sounds such as adult exclamation.	Van Riper
12 - 14	Marks with a pencil or crayon; amuses self for brief periods in this way	Vinland Social Maturity Scale
15	Has four or five words including names; uses jargon but usually indicates his wants by pointing and vocalizing. Says “ta-ta” or equivalent for “thank you”.	Gesell
18	Has a vocabulary of as many as 10 sizable words; he names “bell” when shown it. May name one picture (dog, shoe, cup, etc.).	Gesell
18	Asks for wants by naming objects; milk, cookie, etc.	Gesell
18	Leaves off beginning and ends of phrases; common expression is “all gone”.	Metraux
21	Has vocabulary of 20 words; combines 2 or 3 words that express 2 or more different ideas, e.g., “daddy go bye-bye”; echoes two or more last words.	Gesell
21 - 24	Expressive vocabulary of at least 25 words, mostly nouns, some verbs, some adverbs, and adjectives; uses names of several familiar objects spontaneously and not merely when they are presented; talks in short sentences or phrases or subject-objects combinations in a practical, useful way.	Meacham/Vinland
2	Vocabulary may exceed 50 words, jargon is discarded in favor of understandable but simple 3-word sentences; uses pronouns; I, me, and you although not always correctly. Soliloquizes, verbalizing immediate experience, referring to self by name (“Johnny fell down”, etc.). Common expression, “mine”.	Gesell
2	Names 3 or more common pictures such as those found in a picture dictionary; names as leafs through the book.	Gesell/Meacham
2	Verbalizes for food, drink, and toilet. Asks for “another” wanting one for each hand.	Gesell

2 - 6	Gives full name.	Gesell
2 - 6	Gives uses of some of the test objects (ball, shoe, penny, pencil, etc.); names test objects: shoe, watch, telephone, flag.	Gesell
2 - 6	Refers to self by pronoun rather than by name.	Gesell
2 - 6	Speech activities are repetitive.	Gesell
2 - 6	Common expression is "I did".	Metraux
3	Vocabulary has innumerable words: speaks in well-formed simple sentences.	Gesell
3	Uses some plurals.	Gesell
3	Names pictures and on request tells the action, e.g., "baby is sleeping."	Gesell
3	Knows a few rhymes (Little Bo-Peep, Miss Muffet, etc.).	Gesell
3	Copies circle; imitates cross.	Gesell
3	Names 8 pictures correctly (cup, kitty, shoes, hose, flag, clock, star, leaf, book).	Gesell
3	Tells sex correctly in response to "Are you a little boy or little girl?".	Gesell
3	Relates experiences. Gives simple accounts of experiences or tells stories (unprompted) with sequential and coherent content and relevant detail.	Vinland
3.6 - 4	Names all primary colors when shown.	Meacham
4	Vocabulary in excess of 1,500 words.	Miller
4	Counts 3 objects, pointing to each in turn.	Gesell
4	Names objects from memory.	Terman
4	Memory for sentences – Say "big boy." Now say, "I am a big boy." Now say, a) I like to eat ice cream cones. b) My watch has two hands. c) Give me just one of them.	Terman
4.4 - 6	Reads and tells a familiar story by way of pictures (Three Bears, etc.).	Meacham
4 - 6	Repeats 4 digits.	Terman
4.6 - 5	Prints simple words such as first name or a few familiar words not using copy. Correct spelling not essential.	Vinland
5	Counts 10 objects, pointing to each in turn.	Gesell
5	Gives a descriptive comment while naming the objects in composite picture.	Gesell
5.5 - 6	Relates fanciful tales; tells an experience or plan of action which is imaginative only.	Meacham
5.5 - 6	Names penny, nickel, dime; asks for them for varying purposes.	Meacham
5.5 - 6	Memory for sentences.	Terman
5.5 - 6	Can count to thirty by ones upon request; does not need help after beginning to count.	Meacham
6	Vocabulary in excess of 2,500 words.	Miller
6 - 7	Can tell a familiar story (Three Bears, etc.), including most of the detail.	Meacham