

Language Development

Age in Months	Typical Development	When to Seek Help
0 - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces sound for pleasure and makes “throaty” sounds • Moves in response to voice & noise • Quiets to human (familiar) voice • Cries to make needs known • Distinguishes some speech sounds, i.e. anger vs. happy/relaxed sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sound other than crying • No responses to voice & noise
3 - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits differentiated crying • Vocalizes when talked, sung to • Turns eye/head to sound • Coos in syllables like ga, ba, da • Localizes to voices, toys • Responds with vocalizations • Responds to name • Varies pitch and experiments with sound play • Vowel sounds predominate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no sounds used • No response to name • Little or no eye contact • Does not localize to voice
6 - 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocalizes constant sounds • Forms disyllabic repetitions (mama) • Vocalizes basic emotions (not verbalize) • “Listens” to others before responding • Imitates tone and pitch qualities of adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No back and forth vocal between child & familiar adult
9 - 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses social gestures • Jargons (babble with intention as if “speaking”) • Imitates sounds in repertoire, facial expressions, coughs, raspberries, etc. • Follows some directions - inhibits activity in response to “no” • Looks at familiar people when named • Imitates constant vowel combinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not following simple cues or directions • Not forming disyllabic repetitions • No jargoning • Not vocalizing constant sounds
12 - 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes name • Imitates familiar words • Uses mama/dada & others • Uses appropriate intonation patterns • Follow simple commands when cued • Uses 1-10 words: inserts a word in jargon • “Practices” and plays with words in repertoire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question child’s ability to understand • Not looking for familiar people when named • No use of single directions • No imitation of sounds in repertoire
15 - 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have 10-19 words (5 months.) 20-29 words (18 months) • Uses 2-3 words phrases • Uses first name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few words used • Questions child’s ability to understand

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks for more • Asks for food/drink • Points to 1 body part (15 months) 4 body parts (18 months) • Brings familiar objects from other room when asked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not requesting simple needs
19 - 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-50 words (21 months) • 200-300 words (24 months) • Uses me/mine (21 months) • Uses I/you (24 months) • Follows familiar directions • Names 3 objects/pictures • Attempts to “tell” events/experiences • Uses short, incomplete sentences • Some prepositions (in, on, out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child does not use language to express self • Child not using new words regularly • Not able to label objects
24 - 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses own name • Uses 3-4 words sentences • Uses past tense & plurals • “What” and “where” used • Talks to other children and adults • Understands simple time concepts (tomorrow) • Likes to hear same story repeated • Follows two-step directions independently • Uses up to 1000 words • “Swears” • Negative used • All vowel sounds acquired and most of consonants sounds although wide variation in consonant production between children can be observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions re: child’s comprehension level • Using only single words to express self • Vocabulary not increasing • Not using own name • Needs cues to follow directions

Intelligibility

- 24 months – 50% to unfamiliar adult
- 36 months – 75% to unfamiliar adults
- 4 years – 100%

Things to consider when determining skill level:

- History of ear infections
- Responds to some pitches (sounds) but not others
- Excessive drooling
- Open mouth posture/mouth breathing, tongue protrusion
- Does child appear to understand everything but have no expressive language
- Does child appear to have problems with comprehension and expressive language
- Swallowing difficulties
- Language/learning environment, and peers/siblings who speak for the child, is the child required to use language