

# FACT SHEET



## SPEECH AND LANGUAGE MILESTONE CHART

For most children, all the skills needed for oral language are acquired naturally by the time they are five years old. A kindergartner, for example uses sophisticated vocabulary and grammar and has nearly accurate pronunciation, which are used effectively to manipulate his or her social environment. In order to acquire this level of language skill, young children must first consistently hear language.

Infants and young children begin to make connections between words, or signifiers, and the things they indicate, when parents and caregivers name objects and actions for them. This is a simple activity, performed almost naturally, that does not require children to speak, but which gives them nevertheless, words they will later use themselves.

Listening to language is the groundwork for later reading skills. This is evident for example, in the early stages of emergent literacy, when children do not comprehend stories sequentially. Instead, they perceive that each picture in a book has its own oral tale. As they appear to mimic reading, children are really retelling the events they have heard read to them previously and still see in the pictures. As children learn to identify letters and words, they gradually come to learn that words tell the story that pictures merely illustrate and that the story itself does not change.

Early language interaction (infants listen, even though they cannot speak) and early language skills acquisition, are critical to the brain's development. The brain is fully ready to think through tactile learning as early as nine months. Language interaction and early exposure to sounds, music, and rhythms remain critical to later learning.

The course of children's development is mapped using a chart of developmental milestones.

These milestones are behaviours that emerge over time, forming the building blocks for growth and continued learning. Some of the categories within which these behaviours are seen include:

1. Cognitive: thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, understanding

2. Language: expressive and receptive abilities
3. Motor coordination: gross/fine motor, jumping, hopping, throwing/catching, drawing, stacking
4. Social Interaction: initiating peer contact, group play
5. Self-help: dressing, eating, washing

### **Speech & Language Milestone Chart**

#### **By Age One**

##### **Milestones**

- Recognizes name
- Says 2-3 words besides "mama" and "dada"
- Imitates familiar words
- Understands simple instructions
- Recognizes words as symbols for objects: Car - points to garage, cat - meows

#### **Activities to Encourage your Child's Language**

- Respond to your child's coos, gurgles, and babbling
- Talk to your child as you care for him or her throughout the day
- Read colorful books to your child every day
- Tell nursery rhymes and sing songs
- Teach your child the names of everyday items and familiar people
- Take your child with you to new places and situations
- Play simple games with your child such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"

#### **Between One and Two**

##### **Milestones**

- Understands "no"
- Uses 10 to 20 words, including names
- Combines two words such as "daddy bye-bye"
- Waves good-bye and plays pat-a-cake
- Makes the "sounds" of familiar animals
- Gives a toy when asked

- Uses words such as "more" to make wants known
- Points to his or her toes, eyes, and nose
- Brings object from another room when asked

### **Activities to Encourage your Child's Language**

- Reward and encourage early efforts at saying new words
- Talk to your baby about everything you're doing while you're with him
- Talk simply, clearly, and slowly to your child
- Talk about new situations before you go, while you're there, and again when you are home
- Look at your child when he or she talks to you
- Describe what your child is doing, feeling, hearing
- Let your child listen to children's records and tapes
- Praise your child's efforts to communicate

### **Between Two and Three Milestones**

- Identifies body parts
- Carries on 'conversation' with self and dolls
- Asks "what's that?" And "where's my?"
- Uses 2-word negative phrases such as "no want".
- Forms some plurals by adding "s"; book, books
- Has a 450 word vocabulary
- Gives first name, holds up fingers to tell age
- Combines nouns and verbs "mommy go"
- Understands simple time concepts: "last night", "tomorrow"
- Refers to self as "me" rather than by name
- Tries to get adult attention: "watch me"
- Likes to hear same story repeated
- May say "no" when means "yes"
- Talks to other children as well as adults
- Solves problems by talking instead of hitting or crying
- Answers "where" questions
- Names common pictures and things
- Uses short sentences like "me want more" or "me want cookie"
- Matches 3-4 colors, knows big and little

### **Activities to Encourage your Child's Language**

- Repeat new words over and over
- Help your child listen and follow instructions by playing games: "pick up the ball, " "Touch Daddy's nose"
- Take your child on trips and talk about what you see before, during and after the trip

- Let your child tell you answers to simple questions
- Read books every day, perhaps as part of the bedtime routine
- Listen attentively as your child talks to you
- Describe what you are doing, planning, thinking
- Have the child deliver simple messages for you (Mommy needs you, Daddy )
- Carry on conversations with the child, preferably when the two of you have some quiet time together
- Ask questions to get your child to think and talk
- Show the child you understand what he or she says by answering, smiling, and nodding your head
- Expand what the child says. If he or she says, "more juice", You say, "Adam wants more juice."

### **Between Three and Four Milestones**

- Can tell a story
- Has a sentence length of 4-5 words
- Has a vocabulary of nearly 1000 words
- Names at least one color
- Understands "yesterday," "summer", "lunch time", "tonight", "little-big"
- Begins to obey requests like "put the block under the chair"
- Knows his or her last name, name of street on which he/she lives and several nursery rhymes

### **Activities to Encourage your Child's Language**

- Talk about how objects are the same or different
- Help your child to tell stories using books and pictures
- Let your child play with other children
- Pay attention to your child when he's talking
- Talk about places you've been or will be going

### **Between Four and Five Milestones**

- Has sentence length of 4-5 words
- Uses past tense correctly
- Has a vocabulary of nearly 1500 words
- Points to colors red, blue, yellow and green
- Identifies triangles, circles and squares
- Understands "In the morning" , "next", "noontime"
- Can speak of imaginary conditions such as "I hope"
- Asks many questions, asks "who?" And "why?"

### Activities to Encourage your Child's Language

- Help your child sort objects and things (ex. things you eat, animals)
- Teach your child how to use the telephone
- Let your child help you plan activities such as what you will make for Thanksgiving dinner
- Continue talking with him about his interests
- Read longer stories to him
- Let her tell and make up stories for you
- Show your pleasure when she comes to talk with you

### Between Five and Six Milestones

- Has a sentence length of 5-6 words
- Has a vocabulary of around 2000 words
- Defines objects by their use (you eat with a fork) and can tell what objects are made of
- Knows spatial relations like "on top", "behind", "far" and "near"

- Knows her address
- Identifies a penny, nickel and dime
- Knows common opposites like "big/little"
- Understands "same" and "different"
- Counts ten objects
- Asks questions for information
- Distinguished left and right hand in herself
- Uses all types of sentences, for example "let's go to the store after we eat"

### Activities to Encourage your Child's Language

- Praise your child when she talks about her feelings, thoughts, hopes and fears
- Comment on what you did or how you think your child feels
- Sing songs, rhymes with your child
- Continue to read longer stories
- Talk with him as you would an adult
- Look at family photos and talk to him about your family history
- Listen to her when she talks to you

### Source

LDOnline, Learning Disabilities Association of America Fact Sheet, 1999

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#### *Speech & Language Milestone Chart*

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