

# Language and Speech Milestones



Ages	Receptive Language	Expressive Language	Speech Production
Birth to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to different tones (angry vs. friendly)</li> <li>• Smiles at person speaking to them</li> <li>• Responds to their name</li> <li>• By 8 months, recognizes a few words</li> <li>• Ceases activity when told “no”</li> <li>• Participates in familiar social games, such as peek-a-boo</li> <li>• Looks at or acts on objects mentioned</li> <li>• Follows the “Give me” command</li> <li>• Waves goodbye when requested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes different cries for help, hunger, and pain</li> <li>• Vocalizes to toys</li> <li>• Imitates some sounds</li> <li>• Vocalizes to self in mirror</li> <li>• Varies volume, pitch, and rate</li> <li>• Takes turns vocalizing</li> <li>• Imitates vocalizations and gestures</li> <li>• By 12 months, pointing gestures emerge</li> <li>• Produces non-words that almost sound like their language</li> <li>• By 12 months, speaks 1 to 2 words</li> </ul>	<p>0 to 2 months, vegetative sounds            2 to 4 months, cooing laughing            4 to 6 months, vocal play            6 to 10 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babbling such as, “baba,” “mama,” “gaga”</li> </ul> <p>12 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied babbling, such as “badogeema”</li> <li>• Babbles with intonation of the language being learned</li> </ul>
1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 12 months, understands approximately 10 words</li> <li>• By 15 months, understands about 50 words</li> <li>• By 18 months, understands 100 to 150 words</li> <li>• Identifies body parts and clothing items</li> <li>• Understands familiar commands</li> <li>• Points to pictures when named</li> <li>• Chooses one object from a group of five</li> <li>• Follows novel commands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 12 to 14 months, uses 3 to 4 words</li> <li>• By 15 months, typically uses 10 spoken words</li> <li>• By 18 months, vocabulary of 50 to 100 words</li> <li>• Between 18 and 22 months, begins combining words</li> <li>• At 24 months, vocabulary of 200 to 300 words</li> <li>• Able to express 2 different needs</li> <li>• Imitates environmental noises</li> <li>• Uses new words regularly</li> <li>• Frequently uses 2-word phrases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses 9 to 10 initial consonants</li> <li>• Uses 5 to 6 final consonants</li> <li>• Speech is about 50% intelligible</li> </ul>

Ages	Receptive Language	Expressive Language	Speech Production
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows 2-step commands</li> <li>• Understands new words on a daily basis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasionally uses 3-word combinations</li> <li>• Uses early pronouns (such as I, me, mine)</li> <li>• Relates personal experiences</li> <li>• Refers to self by name</li> </ul>	
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2, understands 1,200 words</li> <li>• Identifies objects by function and people by actions</li> <li>• Begins to understand linguistic concepts (size, colors, common adjectives, prepositions)</li> <li>• Responds well to 2- to 3-part commands</li> <li>• Answers what, where, when questions</li> <li>• Understands complex sentences, such as first/then statements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 24 and 30 months, begins combining 3 to 4 words</li> <li>• By 3 years, uses increasingly lengthy word combinations</li> <li>• Early grammatical structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plural “s”</li> <li>• Possessive “s”</li> <li>• Present progressive “-ing”</li> <li>• Negatives</li> <li>• Prepositions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Relates experiences to past events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 3, speech is approximately 75% intelligible</li> <li>• Several sound substitutions persist, such as “wion” for “lion”</li> </ul>
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 3, understands 3,600 words</li> <li>• Understands many semantic attributes and linguistic concepts</li> <li>• Follows familiar 3-step directions regularly</li> <li>• Follows novel 2-part commands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 3, vocabulary of 1,000 words</li> <li>• Uses 3- to 5-word utterances regularly</li> <li>• By 3, complex sentences emerge</li> <li>• Grammatical structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past tense</li> <li>• Future tense</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use of “why” questions emerges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 3, able to rhyme</li> <li>• Continues to make some sound simplifications and substitutions, such as “wed” for “red”</li> </ul>

Ages	Receptive Language	Expressive Language	Speech Production
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in why and how things work</li> <li>• Answers simple questions about an oral story</li> </ul>		
4 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands 5,600 words</li> <li>• Comprehends comparative and superlative adjectives</li> <li>• Time and positional concepts</li> <li>• Understands most what, where, when questions</li> <li>• Completes 3-step unrelated commands with linguistic modifiers</li> <li>• Early verbal reasoning skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 4, vocabulary of 1,600 words</li> <li>• By 5, uses 2,200 to 2,500 words</li> <li>• Speaks in sentences or statements of 5 to 6 words on average</li> <li>• Asks many questions</li> <li>• Tells sequenced stories</li> <li>• Describes the function of objects</li> <li>• Communicates cause-effect relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 4, speech is 90% intelligible</li> <li>• By 5, speech is 90-100% intelligible</li> </ul>