

## SPEECH & LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The development of communication skills begins in infancy, before the emergence of the first word. Any speech or language problem is likely to have a significant effect on the child's social and academic skills and behavior. The earlier a child's speech and language problems are identified and treated, the less likely it is that problems will persist or get worse. Early speech and language intervention can help children be more successful with reading, writing, schoolwork, and interpersonal relationships.

### Hearing and Understanding

#### Birth-3 Months

- Startles to loud sounds
- Quiets or smiles when spoken to
- Seems to recognize your voice and quiets if crying
- Increases or decreases sucking behavior in response to sound

#### 4-6 Months

- Moves eyes in direction of sounds
- Responds to changes in tone of your voice
- Notices toys that make sounds
- Pays attention to music

#### 7 Months-1 Year

- Enjoys games like peekaboo and pat-a-cake
- Turns and looks in direction of sounds
- Listens when spoken to
- Recognizes words for common items like "cup", "shoe," or "juice"
- Begins to respond to requests (e.g. "Come here" or "Want more?")

### Talking

#### Birth-3 Months

- Makes pleasure sounds (cooing, gooing)
- Cries differently for different needs
- Smiles when sees you

#### 4-6 Months

- Babbling sounds more speech-like with many different sounds, including *p*, *b* and *m*
- Vocalizes excitement and displeasure
- Makes gurgling sounds when left alone and when playing with you

#### 7 Months-1 Year

- Babbling has both long and short groups of sounds such as "tata upup bibibibi"
- Uses speech or noncrying sounds to get and keep attention
- Imitates different speech sounds
- Has one or two words (bye-bye, dada, mama). although they may not be clear

## 1 - 2 years

### Hearing and Understanding

- Points to a few body parts when asked.
- Follows simple commands and understands simple questions ("Roll the ball," "Kiss the baby," "Where's your shoe?").
- Listens to simple stories, songs, and rhymes.
- Points to pictures in a book when named.

### Talking

- Says more words every month.
- Uses some one- or two- word questions ("Where kitty?" "Go bye-bye?" "What's that?").
- Puts two words together ("more cookie," "no juice," "mommy book").
- Uses many different consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

## 2-3 years

### Hearing and Understanding

- Understands differences in meaning ("go-stop," "in-on," "big-little," "up-down").
- Follows two requests ("Get the book and put it on the table").

### Talking

- Has a word for almost everything.
- Uses two- or three- word "sentences" to talk about and ask for things.
- Speech is understood by familiar listeners most of the time.
- Often asks for or directs attention to objects by naming them.

### 3 - 4 years

#### Hearing and Understanding

- Hears you when you call from another room.
- Hears television or radio at the same loudness level as other family members.
- Understands simple "wh" (who, what, where, why) questions.

#### Talking

- Talks about activities at school or at friends' homes.
- Speaks clearly enough that people outside of the family usually understand his or her speech.
- Uses a lot of sentences that have four or more words.
- Usually talks easily without repeating syllables or words.

### 4 - 5 years

#### Hearing and Understanding

- Pays attention to a short story and answers simple questions about it.
- Hears and understands most of what is said at home and in school.

#### Talking

- Makes voice sounds clear like other children's.
- Uses sentences that give lots of details (e.g., "I like to read my books").
- Tells stories that stick to topic.
- Communicates easily with other children and adults.
- Says most sounds correctly (except perhaps certain ones such as *l, s, r, v, z, ch, sh, th*).
- Uses the same grammar as the rest of the family.

This literature is provided by **Speech Train**, an independent speech and language therapy service providing high quality, individualised, evaluation and speech-language therapy services for children.

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