

Speech-Language Developmental Milestones

Birth – 3 months

- At 1 month, baby can discriminate among individual speech sounds.
- Reflexive cries, vegetative cries.
- Makes pleasure sounds (cooing, going).
- Cries differently for different needs.
- Smiles when sees a person.

3 – 6 months

- Can discriminate among sequences of sounds.
- Variety of vocalizations significantly increase.
- Repeats the same sounds.
- Transitional or marginal babbling single-syllable and consonant-like sounds.
- 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.
- Uses sounds and gestures to indicate wants.

6 – 12 months

- Babbling has long and short groups of sounds, such as ‘ta-ta, up-up, bibibi’.
- Reduplicated babbling (‘bababa’).
- Uses speech or non-crying sounds to get and keep attention.

10 months

- First words emerge
- Imitates different speech sounds.
- Has 1-3 words (bye-bye, da-da, mama).
- Understands “no” and “hot”.
- Responds to simple requests.
- Understands and responds to own name.
- Uses song-like intonation pattern when babbling.
- Uses echolalia.
- Variegated babbling (“dadu”).
- Jargon babbling (intonational changes added to syllable production).
- Uses speech sounds rather than cries to get attention.
- Uses nouns almost exclusively.

18 – 24 months

- Uses words more frequently than jargon.
- Has expressive vocabulary of 50-100 or more words.
- Has receptive vocabulary of 300 or more words.
- Combines nouns and verbs.
- Begins to use pronouns.
- Answers “What’s that?” questions.
- Knows 5 body parts.
- Accurately names a few familiar objects.

2 – 3 years

- Use 2-3 word sentences.
- Understands concepts of “one” and “all”.
- Requests items by name.
- Points to pictures in books.
- Asks 1-2 word questions.
- Uses 3-4 word phrases.
- Speech is understood by familiar listeners most of the time.
- Names objects to direct person’s actions.
- Begins to use appropriately irregular verbs.
- Beginning of morphemes: articles, pronouns, present progressive (-ing), plurals, past tense, contractions, “is”.
- Has receptive vocabulary of 500 to 900 plus vocabulary.
- Has an expressive vocabulary of 50 to 250-plus words.
- Shows multiple grammatical errors.
- Frequently exhibits repetitions.
- Speaks with a loud voice.
- Uses vowels correctly.
- Consistently uses initial consonants.
- Frequently omits medial consonants.
- Frequently omits or substitutes final consonants.
- Uses approximately 27 phonemes.

3 -4 years

- Morphemes become consistent.
- Irregular forms of verbs used (see/saw, eat/ate).
- Simple sentences: negatives, imperatives, questions, relative pronouns.
- Talks about activities at school and home.
- Understands simple question words: who, what, where, why
- Follows 2 and 3 part commands.
- Produces simple verbal analogies.
- Uses language to express emotion.
- Repeats 6-13 syllable sentences accurately.
- Identifies objects by name.
- Uses nouns and verbs most frequently.
- Comprehends 1,200 to 2,000 words.
- Uses 800 to 1,500 words.
- Masters 50% of consonants and blends.
- Speech is 80% intelligible.
- Sentence grammar improves, although some errors still persist.
- Appropriately uses “is”, “are” and “am” sentences.
- Tells 2 events in chronological order.
- Engages in long conversations.
- Uses some contractions, irregular plurals, future tense verbs and conjunctions.
- Consistently uses regular plurals, possessives and simple past verbs.

4 – 5 years

- Continues to develop relative clauses, passives, other complex sentences, reflexive pronouns, comparatives, adverbial word endings, irregular comparisons and grammar.
- Comprehends 2,500 to 2,800 words.
- Uses 1,500 to 2,000 words.
- Uses “could” and “would”.
- Errors of noun/verb and adjective/noun agreement.
- Uses grammatically correct sentences.
- Asks for word definitions.
- Enjoys rhyme, rhythms, and nonsense syllables.
- Produces consonants with 90% accuracy.
- Significantly reduces number of persistent sound omissions and substitutions.
- Talks about experiences at school and friends’ homes.
- Relays a long story accurately.
- Pays attention to a story and answers simple questions about it.
- Uses some irregular plurals, possessive pronouns, future tense, reflexive pronouns, and comparative morphemes in sentences.
- Makes indirect requests.
- Uses deictic terms (this, that, here, these).

5 – 6 years

- Children continue to master complex grammar and new linguistic meanings during school years.
- Comprehends 13,000 words (by age 6).
- Uses all pronouns consistently.
- Uses superlatives.
- Uses adverbial word endings (ex- “slowly”).
- Describes location or movement with prepositions (through, away, from, toward, over).

6 – 7 years

- Comprehends 20,000 to 26,000 words.
- Understands “if” and “so” clauses.
- Develops perfect tense with “have” and “had”.
- Uses nominalization clauses.
- Uses irregular plurals.
- Refines syntax.

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