

LANGUAGE



Language includes a child's ability to understand the speech of others and to express his thoughts and ideas. No two children are alike. Each differs in his rate and pattern of growth. Though growth may be uneven, it follows an orderly sequence.

Your child will use words to communicate when the foundation for language is secure. The following are prerequisites for verbal communication.

My child is ready to start talking when he or she:

- enjoys playing with people.
- shows interest in interacting with people.
- imitates motor movements.
- imitates the sounds of others.
- takes turns in a play situation.
- uses gestures and actions to communicate.
- practices making a variety of sounds by himself/herself.
- uses sounds to communicate.
- plays meaningfully with toys and objects.
- pays attention to a speaker.
- prefers to interact with others rather than to be alone.
- actively seeks the attention of others and initiates play.

What can I do to help my child start talking?

- Play often with your child in ways your child enjoys.
- Wait for your child to respond to you. Try to avoid doing all the talking.
- Follow your child's lead in your play together.
- Balance your actions in play. Your child should take as many turns as you when you play.
- Imitate your child's sounds so he/she will learn to imitate yours.
- Responds to and encourage your child's sounds as if they are "real words."
- Show him or her to say using only 1 or 2 word phrases.
- Make talking time fun for your child.
- Translate your child gestures and sounds into 1 or 2 real words.
- Don't ask lots of questions. Show your child what to say instead.
- Play with words. Words are your child's most important toys.
- Label things and experiences for your child as they happen.



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Milestones

0-1 Year

- ✓ Echoes or imitates a number of syllables and sounds
- ✓ Combines syllables
- ✓ Varies cry to indicate needs
- ✓ Vocalizes for social reasons
- ✓ Responds to a familiar name or “no-no”
- ✓ Waves bye-bye or patty-cakes when asked

1-2 Years

- ✓ Uses single words like “mama”, “dada”, kitty”
- ✓ Uses exclamatory expressions like “oh-oh”
- ✓ Gestures to indicate wants
- ✓ Follows simple directions
- ✓ Locates objects when named
- ✓ Identifies three body parts when named

2-3 Years

- ✓ Uses vocabulary of 300-600 words
- ✓ Uses 2-3 word sentences
- ✓ Uses language to express wants (ex. “I want cookie”)
- ✓ Asks for “more”
- ✓ Asks questions like “what’s that?”
- ✓ Demands to do things by himself

3-4 Years

- ✓ Uses vocabulary of about 900 words
- ✓ Uses 3 to 4 word sentences
- ✓ Uses language to get information and control others (Ex. “Give me a cookie”)
- ✓ Asks many questions
- ✓ Gets confused by time words like “yesterday”, “soon”
- ✓ May experience normal non-fluency
- ✓ Average listener understands his speech

4-5 Years

- ✓ Uses vocabulary of about 1500 words
- ✓ Uses 4 to 5 word sentences
- ✓ Asks “who” and “why” questions
- ✓ Relates experiences in a logical order
- ✓ Uses describing words like colors, “big”, “fat”

Beyond 5 years

- ✓ Uses vocabulary of 3000-7000 words
- ✓ Use 6 to 7 word sentences
- ✓ Uses language for social reasons like, “I want to play”, “Leave me alone”, “I got a new bike”
- ✓ Speaks with correct grammar and word endings
- ✓ Tells simple stories
- ✓ Language is becoming adult-like

Beyond 8 Years

- ✓ Uses more complex adult-like language
- ✓ Gives logical solutions to problems like “What if. . .”
- ✓ Understands humor-jokes, riddles
- ✓ Uses and understands some idioms like “yelled his head off”

How to Improve Language Skills

Language includes a child’s ability to understand the speech of others and to express his thoughts and ideas. Homes, as well as school experience contribute to your child’s language development. You can help your child develop better language skills through a variety of home activities. It’s important to remember to:

- Talk with your child. Answer his questions and ask questions of him.
- Listen to your child. Give your child your full attention whenever possible. Be sure he knows that what he does or says is important to you.
- Praise your child. Take every opportunity to enjoy your child as he is.

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Building Activities



Shopping and putting away groceries can teach your child:

- To follow simple directions:
“Put the milk in the refrigerator.”
“Put the cereal on the shelf.”
- New Vocabulary words:
cupboard, shelf, counter, aisle, cash register, onion, frozen, package, etc.
- To group similar items:
fruits, vegetables, meats, drinks,
- items that are: round, square, soft, crunchy, heavy, etc.
- To compare items:
big, bigger, biggest, long, longer, longest

Doing the laundry can teach your child

- To follow simple directions:
“Put the socks in the laundry basket.”
“Put the dirty towels in the washing machine.”
- new vocabulary words:
blouse, separate, clean, dirty, pair, detergent, red, green, stain, rough, etc.
- possessives:
Daddy’s shirt, our towels, his pants, your sister’s pajamas, my socks
- to explain in a logical order:
first we sort the laundry; second... third...; etc.

Reading a story to your child can teach him:
new vocabulary words

- to ask and answer questions: who, what, when, where, why, how
- to listen carefully
- to explain in a logical order
first..., second..., etc., before... after

Playing with other children can teach your child to use social language skills:

- to request:
“Can I have that?”
- to protest:
“I don’t want to do that.”
- to talk in a group:
turn taking, asking questions
- to express his feelings and opinions:
“I’m mad.” “I like to play baseball.”