

Speech Milestone Guide

What Your Child Should Be Saying at Each Age

Every child develops at their own pace. However, there are general milestones that help identify whether a child's speech and language development is on track. This guide explains what to expect at each age — and when to seek professional support.

By 6 Months

- ✓ Responds to sounds and voices
- ✓ Makes cooing and gurgling sounds
- ✓ Smiles and laughs
- ✓ Looks towards source of sounds

■ Concern if: No response to sounds, no smiling

By 12 Months

- ✓ Says 'mama' and 'dada' (may not be specific)
- ✓ Imitates sounds and gestures
- ✓ Points to objects of interest
- ✓ Understands 'no' and simple words
- ✓ Waves bye-bye

■ Concern if: No babbling, no gestures, no single words

By 18 Months

- ✓ Says at least 10 different words
- ✓ Points to show you things
- ✓ Follows simple one-step instructions
- ✓ Identifies familiar objects when named

- ✓ Uses words more than gestures

■ Concern if: Fewer than 6 words, not pointing

By 2 Years

- ✓ Uses at least 50 words
- ✓ Combines two words ('more milk', 'go out')
- ✓ Strangers understand about 50% of speech
- ✓ Follows two-step instructions
- ✓ Names pictures in books

■ Concern if: Fewer than 25 words, no two-word phrases

By 3 Years

- ✓ Uses 3-4 word sentences
- ✓ Strangers understand about 75% of speech
- ✓ Asks 'why', 'what', 'where' questions
- ✓ Understands 'in', 'on', 'under'
- ✓ Can tell simple stories

■ Concern if: Unclear speech, less than 200 words

By 4 Years

- ✓ Uses sentences of 4-5 words or more
- ✓ Strangers understand almost all speech
- ✓ Tells stories with beginning, middle, end
- ✓ Understands most of what is said to them
- ✓ Uses past tense correctly most of the time

■ Concern if: Still unclear, difficulty being understood

When to Seek Help Immediately

- Your child loses language skills they previously had (regression)
- Your child does not respond to their name by 12 months
- Your child does not use any words by 16 months
- Your child does not use two-word phrases by 24 months
- You have any concern at any age — trust your instinct

**Worried about your child's speech? Talk to us for free. Call or WhatsApp:
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