

EVERY CHILD A TALKER: SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CHART

Age	Attention and Listening	Understanding (Comprehension/Receptive language)	Talking (Expressive Language)	Social Communication and Use of Language	Speech Sounds	Play
0-11 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns towards sounds and locates a range of sounds accurately • By 6m can pay fleeting attention but easily distracted by new event • Stops and looks when hears own name • Is intrigued by new events and actions • Listens to, distinguishes, and responds to intonations and the sounds of voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 6m responds to different tones of voice • Recognises parent's voice • By 10m stops and looks when hears own name • By end of 1st year, begins to understand frequently used words such as "all gone", "bye bye", "no" • Understands single signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates in a variety of ways including smiling, gurgling, crying, making sounds • By 6m will engage in sound play with familiar adult • Babbling in strings of connected but different sounds, e.g. 'ba-da-ga' • By 12m, may hear "word" like utterances e.g. "dada", "mama", "gogo" • Can point to object or activity to express wants and needs • May have 1 -5 "words" by 12m, related to child's own world and functional needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gazes at faces and copies facial movements e.g. sticking out tongue • Makes sounds with their voice for social interaction • By 12m uses voice, gesture, eye contact & facial expression to make contact with people and keep their attention • Initiates an interaction with adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babbles with range of sound combinations • By 12m consonants such as "b, d, g, m, n, w" • predominate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploratory play; mouths, bangs, shakes objects • By 12m, relates 2 objects, e.g. spoon in cup • Plays alone with toys
8-20 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes to listen to a wide variety of sounds • By 12m concentrates on most powerful stimulus, difficult to re-focus • Is easily distracted by noises or other people talking • By 18m will attend to own choice of activity, tolerates limited intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 12m understands key words in phrase e.g. "Where's your nose?" • By 12m recognises photos of familiar people and objects • Understands simple words in context and understands more than they can say • Understands naming words e.g. shoe ,ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates personal words as begins to develop language • Uses around 10-20 single words although these may not be clear • Beginning to use words for a range of purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes being with familiar adults and watches and copies their body language including gesture and pointing • Realises that their voice and actions have an effect on others • Use pointing with eye gaze to share an interest and make a request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech consists of mix of "jargon" and some real words • May be difficult to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeats actions that were enjoyed • Begins "pretend" play with toys e.g. gives doll a drink • Involves others in pretend play
16-26 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listens to and enjoys rhythmic patterns in rhymes and stories • Starts to focus on an activity of own choice • Responds to own name and can move attention briefly and then re-focus • Single channelled attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands action words e.g. "sleep", "jump" • By 2y, understands simple instructions/phrases when context apparent, e.g. "get mummy's shoes" • Understands instructions with 2 key words (or signs) e.g. "make teddy jump" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 24m beginning to put 2 words(or signs) together e.g. "Mummy's car", "more juice" • Uses different types of everyday words, nouns, adjectives, verbs • Uses up to 50 words • Asks questions e.g. "where drink?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in stories, songs and rhymes • Begins to express feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2y6m starting to use "f, s, sh" • Immaturities heard e.g. "tar" for "car" • "pu" for "spoon" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts to demonstrate 2 part play sequence e.g. drives car to petrol station + fills petrol • Beginning to play with miniature toys e.g. small world

Age	Attention and Listening	Understanding (Comprehension/Receptive language)	Talking (Expressive Language)	Social Communication and Use of Language	Speech Sounds	Play
22 -36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to listen to talk with interest, but still distracted • By 30m can attend to adults choice of activity for short time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can identify objects by use e.g. "Which one do we eat?" • Understands simple concepts such as in/on/under, big/little • Understands simple "who", "what", "where " questions but not "why" or "when?" • Understands a simple story with pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is learning new words frequently and rapidly • uses up to 300 words • Can link 3-4 words together • Starting to use past tense e.g. "me falled over" • Using some question words e.g. "what?", "where?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can hold a short conversation but jumps from topic to topic • Expresses emotions towards adults and peers • Has some favourite stories, songs and rhymes • Uses language to share feelings, experiences and thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 3y all vowels are present. • Consonant sounds such as "s, f, sh, z, v, ch" used Usually understood by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of symbolic play e.g. box is boat • Plays alongside others • Some make believe play e.g. tea party, toys lined up, food offered
30-50 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 36m can shift to a different task if attention fully obtained • Listens to others in 1:1 or small groups when conversation interests them • Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused on own activity) • Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 3y beginning to understand instructions with 3 key words e.g. "Give the big ball to teddy" • Understanding increasing number of "describing" words e.g. "cold", "top" • Beginning to understand negatives e.g. "can't" • Understands "why" questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses simple statements and questions, often with gesture • Uses sentences with 4-6 words • Beginning to use linking words such as "and", "because" • Increasing vocabulary 500-1500 words (by 4yrs) • Uses complex sentences to elaborate an idea • Uses talk to: connect ideas; explain what is happening; anticipate what might happen next; recall past experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can initiate conversations • Joins in with rhymes and stories • Enjoys rhythmic activities and shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration • Understands turn taking and sharing • Can describe main story settings, events and principal characters • Talks freely about home and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly understood by others, even in connected speech • By 4y uses "f, s, sh" etc consistently • Blends still simplified e.g. "sp" "p" "tr" "t" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes on role of another person during play e.g. fireman • Play with construction toys e.g. duplo • Co-operative play with others, turn takes • Loves home corner/ dressing up
40-60 + months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustains attentive listening, respond to what they have heard with relevant comments, questions or actions • Attention is more flexible and able to listen and do at the same time; two channelled • Can take verbal direction without needing to interrupt the task and look up • By 5y, maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands "how?" by giving explanations • More aware of abstract ideas including time in relation to past, present and future • Understands humour e.g. jokes, nonsense rhymes • Understands a simple story without pictures • Understands instructions with sequence words: "first...next...last" • Understands everyday conversations unless ambiguous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence length and complexity gradually increasing • More question words e.g. "when?", "how?" • Uses sentences that are easily understood by adults and peers • Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play • Will ask the meaning of words • Extends vocabulary, by grouping & naming, exploring the meanings and sounds of new words • By 5yrs using 5000 words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has confidence to speak to others about their own wants and interests • Takes account of what others say • Uses language for a range of purposes • Uses talk to pretend and for imaginary situations • Uses language to express needs/feelings in appropriate ways • Works as part of a group or class, taking turns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 5y fully intelligible to others • May not use "th" • May swop "w" for "r" • May find it difficult to say 3 consonants together e.g. scratch • Multi-syllabic words difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows rule-governed games e.g. Simon Says • Engages in longer sequences of pretend play e.g. acting out familiar situations • Increasing use of imagination

Age	Understanding (Comprehension/Receptive language)	Talking (Expressive Language)	Social Emotional development
5-7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to understand metaphor and more literal language Understands gross time periods, e.g. night/day, yesterday Starts to understand the passive tense, e.g. "the man was chased by the dog" Understands absurdities in meaning, i.e. what is possible/impossible Can differentiate fantasy from reality Understands instructions containing a clause, e.g. "show me the box that is red" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most speech sounds used correctly Uses all pronouns (exceptive reflexive correctly) Starts to use language to make jokes Starts to ask for clarification using words and sentences Constructs complex sentences using more difficult conjunctions, e.g. so that, because etc. Starts to re-word a sentence to repair a conversational breakdown Narrative of an event/story contains a true plot, character development and sequence of events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good understanding of emotions in self and how to express them using words and sentences Starts to label more complex emotions in others related to the 'here and now' Realises that people can experience different emotions to the same event, e.g. Tom may be scared but Linda may be happy on Bonfire Night Can keep a secret
7-11 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands some implied meaning, e.g. shouldn't you take an umbrella? Understands more abstract words, e.g. disaster Understands instructions involving the concept of exclusion, e.g. "show me all the ones you've completed except for the one you did yesterday" Can understand more technical vocabulary that is subject-specific <p>By the end of this developmental age range:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts to understand double negatives e.g. "If I don't work tonight, I shan't be able to complete this by the morning" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can explain the meanings of words Consistently uses the passive tense, e.g. the lolly was eaten by Jack Beginning to use slang Can construct sentences using time concepts, e.g. "I ate my tea before I went out to play" Starts to use language to negotiate, e.g. "if you do this, I will do that" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can compare themselves to others and become concerned about own abilities Understanding of rules better established e.g. board games Understanding of justice still one-sided and self-centred Starts being able to feel guilt Realises that people can experience more than one emotion to one event e.g. excited and scared when starting a new school Can use language to explain a problem but may still need adult support to resolve the issue Starts to learn from mistakes but needs adult support to make changes
11-14 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that words can have multiple meanings in different situations, e.g. 'table' → actual object or grid with information (in Maths) Understands the difference between fact and opinion Begins to understand that people can have different conversational styles/express themselves differently, when getting the same message across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can use complex conjunctions e.g. although, even though etc. Starts to use subject specific vocabulary out of context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses anger freely but may be inappropriately done Dependent on peer approval to feel confident Starts to resolve own problems independently Learns from mistakes and can change practice accordingly

14-16 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation skills start improving • Starts to plan ahead and think about their future • Able to gain meaning from and analyse complex written text • Understands fully that people can have different conversational styles/express themselves differently, when getting the same message across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to express complex views and thoughts in the written form • Able to debate the pros and cons of something/an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts to become more self-controlled • Starts developing own values about world which may not match their parents' ideas • Starts to become more tolerant of others • Starts to become less sensitive about criticism • Starts developing gesture/sincere empathy for wider world issues, e.g. poverty • More skilled at resolving conflict
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