

Language Development

Age of child	Typical language development
6 months	<p>Vocalisation and intonation.</p> <p>Responds to name.</p> <p>Responds to human voices without visual cues by turning their head and eyes.</p> <p>Responds appropriately to friendly and angry tones.</p> <p>Uses a different cry for different situations. For example, one cry says <i>'I'm hungry'</i> and another says <i>'I have pain'</i>.</p> <p>He or she repeats the same sound a lot and <i>'coos and goos'</i> when content.</p> <p>Babbling occurs. This babbling will sometimes sound like speech/talking. It includes sounds including the bilabial (two lip) sounds 'p', 'b' and 'm'.</p>
12 months	<p>The sound of babbling changes and includes more consonants as well as long and short vowels.</p> <p>First word is spoken.</p> <p>Uses one or more words with meaning (this might be a fragment of a word).</p> <p>Understand simple instructions, especially if vocal or physical cues are given.</p> <p>Practices inflection.</p> <p>Is aware of the social value of speech.</p> <p>Uses speech or other sounds (other than crying) in order to get your attention and hold on to it.</p>
18 months	<p>Has vocabulary of approximately 5-20 words.</p> <p>Vocabulary made up mostly of nouns.</p> <p>Some echolalia (repeating a word or phrase over and over).</p> <p>Much jargon with emotional content.</p> <p>Is able to follow simple commands.</p>
24 months	<p>Can name a number of objects common to their surroundings.</p> <p>Is able to use at least two prepositions, usually chosen from the following: in, on, under.</p> <p>Combines words into a short sentence – largely noun-verb combinations.</p> <p>Length of sentences is given as 1 – 2 words.</p> <p>Asks two-word questions.</p> <p>Approximately two-thirds of what the child says should be intelligible.</p> <p>Vocabulary of approximately 150-300 words.</p> <p>Rhythm and fluency often poor.</p> <p>Volume and pitch of voice not yet well controlled.</p> <p>Can use two pronouns correctly: I, me, and you. Although me and I are often confused.</p> <p>My and mine are beginning to emerge.</p> <p>Responds to such commands as <i>'Show me your eyes (nose, mouth, hair)'</i>.</p> <p>Has over 20 words.</p> <p>Understands that word order affects meaning.</p> <p>75% of children's two-word utterances can be summarised in the existence of 11 semantic relations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attributive: <i>'big house'</i> 2. Agent-Action: <i>'Daddy hit'</i> 3. Action Object: <i>'hit ball'</i> 4. Agent Object: <i>'Daddy ball'</i> 5. Nominative: <i>'that ball'</i> 6. Demonstrative: <i>'there ball'</i> 7. Recurrence: <i>'more ball'</i> 8. Non-existence: <i>'all-gone ball'</i> 9. Possessive: <i>'Daddy chair'</i> 10. Entity + Locative: <i>'book table'</i> 11. Action + Locative: <i>'go store'</i>

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36 Months	<p>Uses pronouns <i>I, you, me</i> correctly.</p> <p>Is using some plurals and past tenses.</p> <p>Is able to add <i>'-ing'</i> to verbs.</p> <p>Knows at least three prepositions, usually <i>'in', 'on', 'under'</i>.</p> <p>Knows chief parts of body and should be able to indicate these if named.</p> <p>Handles three word sentences easily.</p> <p>Has about 900-1,000 words.</p> <p>About 90% of what the child says should be intelligible.</p> <p>Verbs begin to predominate.</p> <p>Understands most simple questions dealing with their environment and activities.</p> <p>Relates experiences so that they can be followed with reason.</p> <p>Able to reason out such questions as <i>'What must you do when you are sleepy, hungry, cool, or thirsty?'</i></p> <p>Should be able to state their sex, name, age.</p> <p>Should not be expected to answer all questions even though they understand what is expected.</p>
4 years	<p>Knows names of familiar animals.</p> <p>Can use at least four prepositions or can demonstrate understanding of their meaning when given commands.</p> <p>Names common objects in picture books or magazines.</p> <p>Knows one of more colours.</p> <p>Can repeat four digits when they are given slowly.</p> <p>Can usually repeat words of four syllables.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding of <i>'over'</i> and <i>'under'</i>.</p> <p>Has most vowels and diphthongs and the consonants <i>p, b, m, w, n</i> well established.</p> <p>Extensive verbalisation when carrying out activities.</p> <p>Understands such concepts as <i>'longer', 'larger'</i> when a contrast is presented.</p> <p>Readily follows simple commands even though the stimulus objects are not in sight.</p> <p>Much repetition of words, phrases, syllables, and even sounds.</p> <p>Sentences become longer with the child able to combine four or more words. Talk about things that have happened away from home (e.g. at school, outings).</p>
5 years	<p>Can use many descriptive words spontaneously – both adjectives and adverbs.</p> <p>Knows common opposites: <i>big-little, hard-soft, heavy-light, etc.</i></p> <p>Has number concept of four or more.</p> <p>Can count to ten.</p> <p>Speech should be completely intelligible, in spite of articulation problems.</p> <p>Should have all vowels and the consonants: <i>m, p, b, h, w, k, g, t, d, n, y.</i></p> <p>Should be able to repeat sentences as long as nine words.</p> <p>Should be able to define common objects in terms of use (hat, shoe, chair).</p> <p>Should be able to follow three commands given without interruptions.</p> <p>Should know their age.</p> <p>Should have simple time concepts: <i>morning, afternoon, night, day, later, after, while, tomorrow, yesterday, today.</i></p> <p>Should be using fairly long sentences and should use some compound and some complex sentences.</p> <p>Can tell long and involved stories.</p> <p>Speech on the whole should be grammatically correct.</p> <p>Has over 200 words.</p>

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6 years	<p>These consonants should be mastered: <i>f, v, sh, th</i>.</p> <p>Speech should be completely intelligible and socially useful.</p> <p>Should be able to tell a rather connected story about a picture, seeing relationships.</p> <p>Children are able to communicate in demanding settings, for example, on the telephone.</p>
7 years	<p>Should have mastered the consonants <i>s-z, r</i>, voiceless <i>th, ch, wh</i>, and the soft <i>f</i> as in <i>George</i>.</p> <p>Should handle opposite analogies easily: <i>girl-boy, man-woman, flies-swims, blunt-sharp, short-long, sweet-sour</i>, etc.</p> <p>Understands such terms as: <i>alike, different, beginning, end</i>, etc.</p> <p>Should be able to tell time to quarter hour.</p> <p>Should be able to do simple reading and to write or print many words.</p>
8 years	<p>Can relate rather involved accounts of events, many of which occurred at some time in the past.</p> <p>Complex and compound sentences should be used easily.</p> <p>Should be few lapses in grammatical constrictions – tense, pronouns, plurals.</p> <p>All speech sounds, including consonant blends should be established.</p> <p>Should be reading with considerable ease and now writing simple compositions.</p> <p>Social amenities should be present in their speech in appropriate situations.</p> <p>Control of rate, pitch, and volume are generally well and appropriately established.</p> <p>Can carry on conversation at rather an adult level.</p> <p>Follows fairly complex directions with little repetition.</p> <p>Has well developed time and number concepts.</p>
8 years +	<p>Essentially communicate in an adult manner with increasing maturity and sophistication through teenage years.</p> <p>Teens begin to understand abstract language, including metaphors, puns and other form of figurative language.</p> <p>Explanations, descriptions and language usage become more figurative and less literal.</p> <p>Should be able to process most texts.</p> <p>Can appreciate multiple meaning of words.</p> <p>Can relate word meanings to contexts.</p> <p>Master syllable stress patterns that distinguish the difference between similar words.</p> <p>Able to form complex syntactic structures.</p> <p>Able to understand complex, multi-clause sentences.</p> <p>Adolescents use emotive, connotative and socially coded language that identifies them with their peer group (e.g. slang and swearing).</p> <p>Mastery of a wide range of connectives (e.g. <i>however, nevertheless</i>).</p> <p>Size of vocabulary continues to increase.</p> <p>Gain knowledge of terminology used in various academic disciplines.</p> <p>Subtle refinements in grammar.</p>