

Language Development

| Age of child | Typical language development |
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| 6 months | <p>Vocalisation with intonation</p> <p>Responds to name</p> <p>Responds to human voices by turning head/eyes without visual clues</p> <p>Responds appropriately to tone of voice, e.g. friendly, angry</p> |
| 12 months | <p>Uses one or more words with meaning (could be a word fragment)</p> <p>Practices inflection</p> <p>Understands simple instructions, especially if vocal or physical cues are given</p> <p>Is aware of the social uses/values of speech</p> |
| 18 months | <p>Has a common vocabulary of between 10 and 20 words</p> <p>Nouns form the majority of their vocabulary</p> <p>Some echolalia (i.e. the repeating of words repetitively)</p> <p>Emotional content becomes evident in word use</p> <p>Able to follow simple commands</p> |
| 24 months | <p>Is able to name common objects in her/his surroundings</p> <p>Is able to use up to 2 prepositions in speech, e.g. under, over, in</p> <p>Forms short sentences, i.e. noun – verb combinations, length up to 4-5 words</p> <p>Vocabulary is generally around 150 – 300 words</p> <p>Approximately two thirds of speech is intelligible and with meaning</p> <p>Fluency and rhythm remain poor</p> <p>Volume and pitch of voice remain poorly controlled</p> <p>Up to two pronouns are used correctly, i.e. I, you, me</p> <p>Responds to commands such as “Touch your ears?”</p> |
| 3 years | <p>Uses pronouns I, me and you correctly</p> <p>Is able to use some past tense verbs correctly</p> <p>Is able to use some plurals correctly</p> <p>Can respond to the main parts of the body (labelling)</p> <p>Handles sentences of three words easily.</p> <p>Vocabulary is between 800 and 1000 words</p> <p>Approximately 90% of speech is intelligible and with meaning</p> <p>Verbs are beginning to predominate in speech</p> <p>Understands and can respond to simple questions about their environment and activities</p> <p>Able to apply reason to respond to questions about themselves, e.g. “What do you do when you are sleepy?”</p> <p>Make-believe becomes a part of play activities</p> <p>Extensive verbalisation during activities</p> <p>Follows simple commands even when objects are not in sight (some abstract understanding)</p> <p>Developing understanding of words which have comparison concepts involved, i.e. larger, longer, smaller, etc</p> <p>Repetition of words, phrases, syllables and sounds</p> |

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| 4 years | <p>Knows names of familiar objects and animals</p> <p>Correctly uses a minim of 4 prepositions</p> <p>Names common objects in books or magazines</p> <p>Knows some colours</p> <p>Can repeat four digits when prompted</p> <p>Is able to say words of up to 4 syllables</p> <p>Understands the words under and over and can use correctly in sentences</p> <p>Can pronounce most vowels, diphthongs and the consonants p, b, m, n and</p> <p>Extensive verbalisation when carrying out activities</p> <p>When contrasting objects can make use of comparison concepts such as smaller, longer, etc</p> |
| 5 years | <p>Makes use of descriptive words – both adverbs and adjectives</p> <p>Knows and make use of common opposites, i.e. big-little, small-large, light-heavy, etc</p> <p>Can count to 10</p> <p>Speech can be intelligible even if there is some articulation difficulties</p> <p>Can repeat sentences up to nine words long</p> <p>Can pronounce most vowels, diphthongs and the consonants b, p, m, n, ng, h, k, g, d, t, y and w correctly</p> <p>Able to define common words in terms of use, e.g. hat – wear on head</p> <p>Follow up to 3 consecutive commands without interruption</p> <p>Know their age</p> <p>Use simple time concepts, i.e. night, day, afternoon, morning, later, etc.</p> <p>Starting to use compound and complex sentences</p> <p>Speech is generally grammatically correct</p> |
| 6 years | <p>The following consonants are mastered: f, v, sh, zh, th</p> <p>Speech is now socially useful</p> <p>Speech generally intelligible</p> <p>Able to tell a self constructed story about a picture</p> |
| 7 years | <p>Should have mastered the consonants s-z, r, ch, wh and the soft g</p> <p>Handles opposite analogies, i.e. boy-girl, woman-man, runs-walks, sweet-sour</p> <p>Understands and uses terms like different, same, end, beginning, middle, etc correctly</p> <p>Able to tell the time to the quarter hour</p> <p>Able to read simple text and write/print many words</p> |
| 8 years | <p>Can provide explanation of rather complex events</p> <p>Includes past, present and future contexts in discussions</p> <p>Compound and complex sentences used easily</p> <p>Occasional lapse in grammatical constructions but generally correct use evident, i.e. tense, pronouns, plurals, contractions, etc</p> <p>All speech sounds well established</p> <p>Reading appropriate text with some ease</p> <p>Forming up simple compositions</p> <p>Social conventions present in speech in appropriate situations</p> <p>Sound control of speech elements such as rate, tone, volume, etc</p> <p>Can conduct a conversation with an adult</p> <p>Follows complex instructions without undue repetition</p> <p>Demonstrates well developed time and number concepts</p> |