



## Preschool Speech & Language Milestones

	Expected skills at this age		
Age	Understanding	Expression	Speech
12 months	Understands 3-50 words Understands routine directions ( <i>come here</i> )	First word by 12 months Frequently uses gestures to communicate (e.g. points to desired object, shakes head)	Babbling with intonation of real language and some understandable real words
18 months	Follows simple 1-step directions Points to body parts and familiar people/objects Understands simple questions "Where's Daddy?"	Vocabulary of 50-100 words by 18 months	Primarily uses simple words with consonant-vowel shape ("ma" "ba") Common early consonants: /h/ /p/ /b/ /m/ /n/ /t/ /d/ /w/
24 months (2 yrs)	Follows related 2-step directions Understands action words Understands early attributes such as big, up	2-word phrases emerge Vocabulary of 200-300 words Asks some wh-questions Uses pronouns I, me, you, it	Speech is 50% intelligible 2-syllable words emerge
30 months	Consistently follows 2-step directions Understands what, who, when questions Understands location / descriptive concepts hot/cold, on/under, etc	Uses 3-word phrases -ing action words emerge Labels early colors Uses prepositions in, on Uses plural -s	

Have concerns about your child's communication development?  
Schedule a free consultation!



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Age	Understanding	Expression	Speech
36 months (3 yrs)	Understands simple wh-questions Identifies objects by function (e.g. <i>what do you use to eat?</i> )	Uses 3-4 word phrases Asks “why” questions Uses irregular past tense Uses is/are verbs	Speech is 75% intelligible to unfamiliar people; 100% intelligible to familiar people
42 months	Understands early colors Understands words for family like grandma and brother	Uses multiple sentences at a time Uses contractions like they’re, he’s, I’m	Accurate production of /k/ /g/ /f/ and “ng” emerges
48 months (4 yrs)	Understands when and how questions Understands basic shapes Follows 3-step directions	Asks when and how questions Uses conjunctions <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> Begins to use more complex sentence types	Accurate production of /l/ /s/ /v/ /z/ “dg” “ch” “sh” emerges Elimination of Cluster Reduction (spoon as “poon”) Speech is 100% intelligible to all listeners
60 months (5 yrs)	Knowledge of letter names and sounds emerges Knowledge of numbers and counting emerges	Uses conjunctions when, so, if Uses all past tense verbs, third person –s (e.g. “sleeps”)	Accurately produces “r” “th” and “zh” (as in “treasure”) Continues to produce errors on “th” (appropriate until age 6)

Resources: McLeod and Crowe, 2018; ASHA How Does Your Child Hear and Talk?; Linguistics Guide to Communication Milestones; Brown’s Stages of Syntactic and Morphological Development; Paul, R., Norbury, C., & Gosse, C. (2017). *Language disorders from infancy through adolescence* (5th ed.). Mosby.