

HELPING YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Here are some tips for improving your child's language skills.

- Talk to your child about every day events. "We are walking to the store."
- Positively reinforce anything your child says. "Yes, the baby is smiling."
- Read to your child. Even if your toddler does not like to sit still for a story, point out words on signs. Try reading to your child just before bedtime as she may be more willing to sit still then.
- Label everything. "Here is the table."
- Use gestures when speaking.
- Do not criticize or correct your child's speech. If your child does not pronounce a word properly, just say the word again correctly in another sentence.
- Tell stories to your child as you are walking or driving places
- Ask your child questions. "Can you see the dog?"
- Change the tone and pitch of your voice to exaggerate or emphasize words.
- Point to objects you are talking about
- Use your child's name frequently when talking to him
- Sing to your child
- Recite rhymes to your child
- Repeat sounds you hear your toddler making
- Respond to your toddler's attempts to talk – and answer in sentences as if you understood what she was saying. "Yes, I like the music, too."
- Touch your child when you are talking with him.

Children learn to talk better when you are talking with them! Watching television and videos does not help your child's language development as much as interacting with you. Children especially need to see and hear you respond to their babblings.

EXPRESSIVE VERSUS RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE DELAY

Age-specific indicators of expressive language delay

0 – 3 months	Does not make noises or sounds, using vowel sounds
6 months	Does not babble, using consonant sounds
12 months	Does not use indicate wants with simple gestures, does not jargon
15 months	Does not use 1 or 2 meaningful words
18 months	Does not use at least 8 – 10 meaningful words
24 months	Does not use two-word phrases; does not use possessive words
30 months	Cannot name pictures, tell about her day
36 months	Does not use four word sentences, does not ask questions
48 months	Does not speak in complete sentences with proper grammar

Age-specific indicators of receptive language delay

0 – 6 months	Does not seem to hear
12 months	Does not understand simple words or commands such as “bye”, “no”, or “milk”
15 months	Does not respond to name; does not point to make needs known
18 months	Does not follow a one-step command such as “Get the ball”
24 months	Cannot point to body parts and does not understand “more” or “mine”
30 months	Cannot follow two-step commands, including “under” and “on”
36 months	Does not understand three-step commands and cannot use words to make needs known
48 months	Cannot differentiate between “big” and “little”; cannot understand questions such as “What do we do when we are thirsty?”

If you have any concerns or questions about your child’s development, please talk with your pediatrician

Typical Language Accomplishments for Children, Birth to Age 6 -- Helping Your Child Become a Reader

Learning to read is built on a foundation of language skills that children start to learn at birth—a process that is both complicated and amazing. Most children develop certain skills as they move through the early stages of learning language. By age 7, most children are reading.

The following list of accomplishments is based on current scientific research in the fields of reading, early childhood education, and child development. (#) Studies continue in their fields, and there is still much still to learn. As you look over the accomplishments, keep in mind that children vary a great deal in how they develop and learn. If you have questions or concerns about your child's progress, talk with the child's doctor, teacher, or a speech and language therapist. For children with any kind of disability or learning problem, the sooner they can get the special help they need, the easier it will be for them to learn.

From birth to age 3, most babies and toddlers become able to:

- * Make sounds that imitate the tones and rhythms that adults use when talking.
- * Respond to gestures and facial expressions.
- * Begin to associate words they hear frequently with what the words mean.
- * Make cooing, babbling sounds in the crib, which gives way to enjoying rhyming and nonsense word games with a parent or caregiver.
- * Play along in games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake."
- * Handle objects such as board books and alphabet blocks in their play.
- * Recognize certain books by their covers.
- * Pretend to read books.
- * Understand how books should be handled.
- * Share books with an adult as a routine part of life.
- * Name some objects in a book.
- * Talk about characters in books.
- * Look at pictures in books and realize they are symbols of real things.
- * Listen to stories.
- * Ask or demand that adults read or write with them.
- * Begin to pay attention to specific print such as the first letters of their names.
- * Scribble with a purpose (trying to write or draw something).
- * Produce some letter-like forms and scribbles that resemble, in some way, writing.

From ages 3-4, most preschoolers become able to:

- * Enjoy listening to and talking about storybooks.
- * Understand that print carries a message.
- * Make attempts to read and write.
- * Identify familiar signs and labels.
- * Participate in rhyming games.
- * Identify some letters and make some letter-sound matches.
- * Use known letters (or their best attempt to write the letters) to represent written language especially for meaningful words like their names or phrases such as "I love you."

At age 5, most kindergartners become able to:

- * Sound as if they are reading when they pretend to read.
- * Enjoy being read to.
- * Retell simple stories.
- * Use descriptive language to explain or to ask questions.
- * Recognize letters and letter-sound matches.
- * Show familiarity with rhyming and beginning sounds.
- * Understand that print is read left-to-right and top-to-bottom.
- * Begin to match spoken words with written ones.
- * Begin to write letters of the alphabet and some words they use and hear often.
- * Begin to write stories with some readable parts.

At age 6, most first-graders can:

- * Read and retell familiar stories.
- * Use a variety of ways to help with reading a story such as rereading, predicting what will happen, asking questions, or using visual cues or pictures.
- * Decide on their own to use reading and writing for different purposes;
- * Read some things aloud with ease.
- * Identify new words by using letter-sound matches, parts of words and their understanding of the rest of a story or printed item.
- * Identify an increasing number of words by sight.
- * Sound out and represent major sounds in a word when trying to spell.
- * Write about topics that mean a lot to them.
- * Try to use some punctuation marks and capitalization.

Based on information from Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, a report of the National Research Council, by the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, 1998; and from the Joint Position Statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1998.