

Is Your Child's Speech and Language Development on Track?



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Most parents want their children to be verbal and outgoing. Speech and language development is the vehicle that allows this to happen. It is through verbal expression that children are able to communicate their needs, thoughts and personality. It is how we, as adults, understand what children need and also what allows us to enjoy their specialness.

So what should you look for in the development of speech and language in your children so that you know that they are on track?

A basic premise is that listening ability is usually three months ahead of speaking ability. This means that words a child understands don't immediately turn into spoken vocabulary.

Key benchmarks in speech and language development include sounds and babbling from three to six months with first words at one year. Don't be alarmed if a child doesn't keep using a word that they have once used. It could take weeks or even months before some words reappear.

Generally, at about eighteen months children begin to use two word phrases. For example you might hear "more milk" or "car go". In the vicinity of two years of age or soon after, short sentences begin to develop. Sentences like "Me want milk." or "Car go up." are used.

Incorrect use of pronouns and lack of articles such as "a" and "the" are common. By age three you may hear sentences such as "She dranked all the juice." The development of past tense can be a slow process that spans a few years.

But, there are some red flags that you should be aware of that could indicate a delay.

Some of these red flags include a child that is not understanding and/or using single words at twelve months. Take special note if a child cannot follow verbal requests to get a special toy, find a common household object or identify family members.

Other indicators would be a child that doesn't have 10 to 20 words by eighteen months or a child that is not using phrases by age two. Vocabulary at all ages develops by leaps and bounds. A child that is three years may have a 300 word vocabulary which can increase to 600 plus words by age four.

Often parents listening to developing speech are concerned with errors in articulation or sound production. By age three a child is able to use the sounds /h/, /w/, /p/, /b/, /m/, /t/, and /d/. At this age a child should be understood by people outside the immediate family.

Usually at ages four to five the sounds /k/, /g/, /y/, and /f/

Bio

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Pediatric Therapy Institute has helped over 8000 children from birth to twenty-one since our opening in 1975. We see children with speech/language delays, learning disabilities, dyslexia, sensory integration disorder, developmental delays, head injuries, orthopedic injuries, motor incoordination, perceptual problems, hyperactivity, attention/deficit, and emotional/behavioral disorders.

Our team provides evaluation and therapy for children having a single problem or a complex syndrome. Caring professionals provide caring, comprehensive treatment at our convenient location. The comfortable atmosphere of our office fosters success and self-confidence.

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develop. Around the sixth year a child should be articulating /s/, /z/, /sh/, /ch/, and /th/. The /r/ is the latest developing sound and tends to be present by age seven. Some children say sounds in advance of the ages listed so be happy if that is the case with your child.

Many children meet these expectations and when they do their parents are thrilled. Other children may not hit the targets exactly but they are still developing well within the normal range.

Common factors that can cause delay are ear infections, increased activity level, weak oral muscles or a visual/motor style of learning.