

## SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

All babies are born with the ability to make all sounds. The sounds they learn are the sounds reinforced by the language they hear around them. There are about 43 sounds in English, depending on accent. Speech sounds are acquired in a predictable developmental sequence. The following are the averages at which sounds are developed. Sounds aren't considered late in developing until they are more than 6 months late in appearing. These are the ages by which about 90 percent of children are able to say the following sounds. Sounds aren't considered mastered until the child can use the sound at the beginning of a word, the end of a word and the middle of a word, which is also the developmental sequence of sounds. This is why the ages at which sounds are developed are typically later than we think, because the child is learning the sound in three ways. Also, using the age 3 (or any other year) as a milestone means from 36 to 47 months. So we don't expect to hit a milestone right on or by their birthday but during the months of that whole year.

By 3 years: p,m,h,n,w,B

By 4 years: k,g,d,t,y,ng,

By 5 years: f, y,l

By 6 years: ,r,s,ch,sh\_

By 7 years: z, j,v,th(unvoiced)

By 8 years: th(voiced),zh (as the g sound in beige) blends (2 or more consonants) st, str, cl, bl, gl, fr, dr,etc.

Having this information will help you have realistic expectations for your child's speech. Never correct your child's pronunciation.

**Model** speech for your child. If your 4 year old child says "fanks" for "thanks" you can say, "I like to hear you say thththanks (draw out the "th") or "thththanks for saying thththanks"

If you tell this same child, "Say thanks" they will likely say "fanks" Since it isn't developmentally appropriate to expect the child to use the "th" sound they can't "hear" it or distinguish the difference between their pronunciation and yours. This is called **auditory discrimination**, which is distinguishing one sound from another. Discriminating the sound from other sounds (especially from a sound the child is using instead of the correct sound) precedes the acquisition of the sound. In other words the child won't develop the sound if they can't distinguish it from the sound they are using to substitute for the correct sound. A speech therapist will teach auditory discrimination through games and activities before teaching a sound.

As in all things developmental, if you have a concern, rule out possible physical causes first.

\* **Check for muscle strength.** If you are concerned about your child's speech development ask your child to copy you as you stick your tongue out, up, down and side to side. Make a game out of it.

You can encourage muscle strength by "making faces" together in front of a mirror. This can also be a time to encourage new words by naming your faces. "This is my silly face. This is my surprised face" etc. Ice-cream cones are great training grounds for teaching and encouraging licking and using our tongues.

**Eye contact** is a very important component of learning speech and language. 90% of communication is non-verbal. Imagine that you only know 50 words in French and while you are visiting your friend Marie in Paris she is talking to you while she has her back to you as she is cooking and the radio is on, competing for your attention. How much of what she is saying will you be able to pick up? This illustrates how difficult it is for young children who are new language learners to understand you without eye contact and attention

**Children learn best through play.** Introduce sounds through play. A snake says, "ssss". A truck goes "rrrr", a train says "chchch" and a lion roars "grr". ( Sounds are first taught by a therapist in isolation, by themselves, in front of a mirror, just FYI )

#### **Speech Development and Intelligence.**

Children who have all their speech sounds early sound intelligent and although they may be, children who have delayed speech may be just as intelligent. Children tend to work on one developmental asset at a time. One child may be working on word acquisition while another child may be working on gross motor skills, fine motor skills, empathy or social skills etc.

More boys are in speech therapy than girls due to the difference in brain development between boys and girls. Girls predetermined by brain development to learn speech and language earlier than boys. Also, speech development/difficulties tend to run in families. Research also suggests that we talk to girls more than we talk to boys.

Children's speech problems are usually sound omissions or sound substitutions. For example it is common for children to use "w" for "l" and common to omit "r".

**Hints on deciphering their speech.** When you don't understand what your child is saying to you look at context and environment. Look for that 90% of nonverbal communication. Then instead of trying to guess what they are saying just repeat to yourself exactly the sounds you are hearing. It is okay to say, "I don't understand " which lets the child know you are having a problem rather than saying "I can't understand you" which says it is something they are aren't doing well. You can also say, "Show me".

**Don't interpret for your child and don't let anyone correct your child.** Rather than interpreting for the child when others don't understand him, such as when he

says, "an a toohie (want a cookie)" instead of saying "He said he wants a cookie" expound on what your child said to make her unintelligible speech part of a conversation, such as, "I know why you want one of those cookies, Grandma's cookies are so good" Don't make your child talk to people they don't want to talk to. If someone says your child is hard to understand right in front of your child be sure and defend her. "We understand her just fine" or "She has lots of wonderful things to tell us". We don't want to say anything that makes a child self-conscious to speak.

**Hearing.** Sound is measured in decibels (dB). A hearing level of conversational speech is 15-20 dB for adults but 0-10 dB for children. Adult hearing levels are higher than children's generally due to noise induced hearing loss. Children's car seats are in the back seat of the car right by the speakers. If you need to turn up the volume in order to hear what is playing on your car audio system this is an assault on the child's hearing. This can cause hearing loss. Switch the balance/fade of the audio to stream through the front speakers of your car rather than the back.

Protecting your child's ears now can prevent hearing loss in their future.

Quarterback Drew Brees made headlines when he protected his toddler son's ears with ear protectors from the noise at the 2010 Superbowl. You can find Baby Banz hearing protector earmuffs on Amazon. Tinnitus or ringing in the ears is caused by hearing loss and is totally preventable but very common in adults.

**Auditory Threshold Shift.** Adult hearing is at 20 dB and children's hearing is at 0-10 dB so children already have more sensitive hearing than adults. If we are exposed to loud noise such as a rock concert that is at 70 dB then for 24 hours after the noisy event our hearing threshold shifts from 20 dB to 70dB. In effect this gives us a temporary hearing loss, and sounds must be a lot louder for us to hear them for a full 24 hours. See the example above on car seat placement and stereo volume. Increased volume so you can hear the music in the front seat is loud enough to cause a hearing threshold shift for your child in the back seat. Later you ask your child at an average conversational level of speech to wash their hands and they don't comply and we think they aren't listening. Loud stereo speaker demonstrations in movie theaters can have the same effect.

**Auditory figure ground** means distinguishing speech sounds from background noise. This is much harder for children than it is for adults. In noisy situations you must get close to your child, make eye contact and speak very clearly in order for your child to hear what you are saying above the noise in a noisy room. Your child may look at you when you call his/her name from across a noisy room because her/his name is more easily recognizable than other words but she/he can't "hear" what you say because your speech just blends in with all the noise around him/her. This is also true of people with hearing loss. It is very hard to hear when speech competes with background noise. We have all experienced this, think of trying to listen to someone talking over a train going by or a rock concert. Hearing aids don't fix the problem for people with hearing loss in terms of hearing over background noise, as background noise and speech are both amplified by the hearing aid. When

talking to people with a hearing loss, make eye contact, say a few words, pause a wee bit and say a few more words. This can also be a good strategy for talking to young children in very noisy environments. It gives more time to process information before receiving more information. Since hearing impaired people rely more on non-verbal communication it may take them a bit longer to follow a conversation. They have a lot to literally attend to.

**Auditory Memory.** Auditory memory is remembering what we hear. Adults remember much more of what they hear than children. Very young children can only remember one- step directions, such as "Get your coat". "Get your coat and put it on" is a two- step direction. One- step direction per year is the rule of thumb up to a point. For example we may expect a child to remember a one step direction at one year of age, a two- part direction at two years of age etc. Also, when directions are separated in time and place they are even more difficult to remember. If the shoes are upstairs and the coat is downstairs and you tell a child, "Get your coat and your shoes" a child may forget what to do after he gets his shoes. Since young children are distractible, if a child has to pass by her block tower that she wants to finish and becomes distracted then she may well forget all the directions. Children aren't necessarily being willful when they don't follow directions. Keep in mind how much we expect them to remember and the time and distance between directions as well as the distractions around them.

**Also be realistic about attention span for your child's age and their innate temperament in terms of distractibility.**

**Just interesting - Delayed auditory feedback.** Ever get feedback, that echo effect, from your phone? It makes it hard to talk. During the Vietnam war some people tried to avoid the draft by faking hearing loss. As part of a hearing test these people had to put on head phones and as they spoke their own speech was played back to them fractions of a second slower than their actual speech. Our speech slows and then halts with this delayed auditory feedback (delay of hearing our own speech) which proved or disproved claims of hearing loss.

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Reference - "**Johnson's Learning to Talk**" text by professor James Law  
PBS Child Development Series

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In the space of 3 or 4 years children pick up virtually all the essentials of a spoken language. All babies learn language at the same rate no matter what language they speak. When looking at developmental averages **REMEMBER A YEAR IS A YEAR LONG, for example age 3 extends from 36 months to 47 months.**

**Nature versus Nurture.** Speech development is part nature and part nurture. Genetics partially determine intelligence and speech and language development. However, a lot speech and language development depends on environment.

**Speech and language development are different things. Here is the distinction between the two.**

**Speech** is the verbal expression of language and includes articulation, which is the way the sounds of words are formed.

**Language** is much broader and refers to the entire system of expressing and receiving information in a way that's meaningful. It's understanding and being understood through communication — verbal, nonverbal, and written.

Although they may overlap, problems in speech and language differ. A child with a language problem may be able to pronounce words well but be unable to put more than two words together. Another child's speech may be difficult to understand, but he or she may use words and phrases to express ideas. And another child may speak well but have difficulty following directions. (Amy Nelson, MA, CCC-SLP)

**Phonology, syntax and semantics** (the building blocks of language) are learned by most children by two and a half. So much to learn in such a short amount of time, children are brilliant! Phonemes are sounds, phonology is combining sounds into words. Morphemes are the smallest meaningful unit of language, "do" is a morpheme but so is "un" because it changes or adds meaning. Syntax is combining words into meaningful phrases and sentences such as, "Get ball" or "All gone". Although these may sound like simple observations they are semantic (they have precise meaning). Add to this tenses, verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs etc. and learning language is truly complicated.

**Receptive vs Expressive Language** - Children understand more than they can express.

Between **19-24** months children have a receptive vocabulary of **300** words and an expressive vocabulary of **50-100 words**

**2-3** year old children have a receptive vocabulary of **500-900** words and an expressive vocabulary of **50-300** words

**3-4** year old children have a language explosion with a receptive vocabulary of **1200-2000** words and an expressive vocabulary of **250-1500**. Generally, children at 1 years old use one word phrases by age 2, 2 word phrases and by 3 children have 3 word phrases to long sentences.

An example of a receptive language game you can play that introduces prepositions is to ask the child, "Put your bear on the table" now "Put your bear under the table" now "Put your bear in the bag". This illustrates your child's receptive language, knowledge of these prepositions. In contrast to make this an expressive language game you would put the bear on the table, under the table and in the bag and as you did these things you would say, "Where is your bear"?

**Mobility.** When children become mobile their language expands as they are able to experience more things.

**Toddler language is very concrete**, objects and actions comprise most of their vocabulary. **Generalization** – toddlers often overextend words, using them to cover things that have similar characteristics. For example, all men may be called "Daddy" and all four-legged animals may be called "dog". As toddlers begin to use words to express thoughts their 2-3 word phrases can be **narrative or questions** depending on their intonation for example, "Play ball" or "Play ball?"

The first word your child will recognize is his/her own name. Children's first words are usually **objects**; ball, book, car, cup, dinner, milk, shoe, spoon, (teddy) bear, people; Mommy, Daddy, other names, **actions**; brush/comb, down, drink, eat, fall (down), go, kiss, off, sit (down), sleep, stop, throw, up, want, wash, **pronouns**; me, mine, I, you, it, **social**; bye, "gimme", hello/he, night-night, here, look, no, yes, there, what, **adjectives**; big, clean, dirty, hot, little, small, more, nice, sick, this. **Beware of pronouns, he/she, mine/yours, his/hers, I, you, my**, we often expect young child to understand complicated instructions or explanations including all kinds of pronouns that they have not developed yet. For example, "**She** can stack **her** blocks, **I** can stack **my** blocks and **you** can stack **your** blocks or **we** can put **ours** together."

At 3-4 years of age children start understanding concepts which is a higher level thinking skill. They refer to past and future events and understand concepts such as color and size.

**Not all children develop language in the same way or at the same rate.** For example, some children tend to develop language in spurts, while others show slow, steady growth. Not all children learn to talk in the same way. Some learn to speak by learning words one by one. Others pay less attention to individual words, but learn to speak in phrases, saying, "Gimme cup of juice," for example. This is one of the reasons we hear of children who hardly talked at 2 and suddenly started using sentences at 3. Einstein is the most famous example of this.

**Intelligence.** It seems obvious to us that children who develop language early are intelligent. Children who develop speech and language later may be just as intelligent if not more. Children tend to work on one developmental asset at a time. One child may be developing fine or gross motor skills while another child may be

developing language, although both children will eventually learn all developmental tasks.

**Second language.** When a child has a second language such as Sign Language or Spanish, count those words with their English words when determining how many words they have in their vocabulary. Language developmental may seem a little slower in one language when a child is learning 2 languages but the child will catch up to developmental expectations and the richness of being bilingual is a great gift.

**Grammar-**between ages 1 and 5 grammar is more easily acquired than at any other time. We have many inconsistencies in our language. Children at 2-3 years of age may say, "I slepted" "My foots" "I runned" "I goed" As your young child engages in pretend play, **she thinks out loud** and talks to herself. The ability to talk in past tense is very important because it is the beginning of your child's understanding and production of stories. These are personal or imaginative stories not stories as in books read to them.

Although these expressions are adorable we need to model correct grammar for children. Although our families often take on "cute" childhood words and they become part of our family culture.

**ACCENT ON WORDS.** We need to make the words we stress or accent match what we are saying. For example, "Please get in your car seat" versus "Please **GET** in that car seat". The first phrase with equal emphasis is mild the second may sound annoyed.

#### **NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION.**

**90% OF COMMUNICATION IS NON-VERBAL.** Non-verbal communication is gestures, smiles, clapping, facial expressions, nodding, shaking head and touch. Children who gesture learn language at a slightly faster rate. Common gestures include nodding your head for yes and shaking your head for no. Parents sometimes have a "look" that communicates approval and/or disapproval.

#### **ENRICHING AND ENCOURAGING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

**Do expect a verbal attempt at communication.** Giving children things when they point and don't use words or anticipating a child's needs to the extent that they don't need to communicate their needs does not help them develop communication skills. Even if your child uses sounds that you don't understand as well as gestures (pointing, putting arms up to be picked up, nodding for yes, etc.) he is learning to talk and to use communication in a meaningful way.

When our children are babies we naturally adopt "**Parentese**", we; use a higher pitched voice, talk more slowly than normal, exaggerate our intonation, and use short concrete, grammatical phrases and repeat what our child says such as when a baby says "shoe" and we say "yes, shoe, you are putting on your shoe".

**Never correct your child or laugh at him.** MODEL, for example, your child says, "My foots" then you say, "Yes, those are your feet".  
**Expand**, using the example above you could say, "Yes, you are putting your feet into your shoes".

**Pretend with your child.** help your child move beyond the "here and now" in her play with toys. help create worlds with words as you play together. for example, if your child says "truck up!" you might reply "that truck is going way up the ramp to the moon!". however, keep child directed play in mind, we want to make sure to show and express value for their ideas and not be taking over the play just adding to it.

**Help your child tell a story about a special event.** To support your child's emerging storytelling abilities, you might pose questions such as, "And what was on top of your birthday cake?" or elaborate on what your child says. For example, if your toddler says, "Big doggie!" you might say, "Yes, Bruno was a very big doggie, wasn't he?" Supporting your child's ability to tell stories helps develop her language skills as well as her appreciation of stories. The family dinner table or when being tucked in for bed at night are great times to reflect on the day. At this time we also model sequencing of stories, a beginning, a middle, and an end. Asking kids, "What did you do at preschool today?" is a big gaping question with too many variables. Try to ask more specific questions.

**Talk about family photos.** Talking with your child about photographs of family events is a great source for stories and will stimulate not only his memory, but his language as well. Constructing photo albums or homemade books about a particular event, such as a child's birthday, is a wonderful way of being able to revisit special events over and over again.

**Give your child words for feelings.** This is a great time to introduce specific words that describe specific feelings. When your child is frustrated, you can introduce words such as "mad", "angry", and "frustrated". Be sure to also name positive feelings, for example, when you are cuddled up reading you can say, "I feel so relaxed laying here reading with you". Then when you tell your child to take a break and try to relax they will know what you mean.



**Self talk.** While you are actively engaged and your child is with you, describe everything you are doing. For example, "I turned on the tap, now I am squirting soap into the water, look at all the bubbles."

**Broadcasting.** You describe what the child is doing, "You scooped up bubbles with your hands. The bubbles go all the way up to your elbow. You threw the bubbles up but you still have some on your hands."

**Label.** For example, you are doing a puzzle with your child and when he lifts up a puzzle piece of a barn a horse is revealed, you would say, "This is a barn, this is a cow. The cow lives in the barn". "This is a horse but this is a unicorn because it has a horn on it's head. Unicorns are just pretend".

**Reading** is a fabulous way to teach vocabulary, language and rhythm. You can read the words, point to picture to pictures, have your child point to pictures, ask her what is going to happen next etc. Also, books have a beginning, a middle, and an end and have meaning just like conversation.

**Music** a predictable sequence, teaches vocabulary and has rhythm and cadence just like speech and language.

**Cadence.** When talking with young children we sometimes help them understand us if we say a few words pause a wee bit to give them time to process what we say just as we would for foreigners and people with hearing loss. Children are, after all, **learning** language. An example of cadence is the way president Obama speaks, "Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah....(pause) Blah" You don't have to talk overly slowly but try not to talk quickly. Your child may not pick up anything you say or just part of what you say when you speak in a rush and it may look like a compliance problem when they only do part of what you ask them to do when in fact they didn't "get" everything you said or what you said hasn't had time to "register".

**Eye contact** is very important. Eye contact shows our children we are listening to them and making eye contact also helps children focus on our speech, language and non-verbal communications.

**NORMAL NON-FLUENCY.** Around three years of age most children go through a phase of non-fluency or stuttering. Children will repeat sounds "bbbball", words "down, down, down the slide", or whole phrases, "I went up all the stairs to, I went up the stairs to, I went up the stairs" to get my ball. **DO NOT CORRECT.** Slow down your own speech and use pauses so the child learns you can pause if you need to stop and think when you talk, and make eye contact and attend when they are talking. Give them time to talk.

**Power of words.** Children imitate what they hear. When children use an inappropriate word, mildly tell them "that it is not a nice word to say" or tell them

"that is not a word our family uses" an example of this may pertain to milder words such as the family preference to use the word "bum" instead of the word "butt". Give your child a word to say instead of the offensive word if necessary. For example, "We aren't going to say \*#!@ any more, we are going to say, "Goodness gracious". **Positive Power**, sometimes children use inappropriate words to get attention. You can also offer your child specific phrases he can use to get your help and attention. A good example of this is to tell him and model for him the phrase, "Excuse me" or have her use non-verbal communication like holding your hand and giving it a gentle squeeze.

**No.** Why do toddlers say "No" so much even when you offer them ice-cream? Because NO is a very powerful word. Toddlers also say no as a sign of their blossoming independence and learning to set their own boundaries. Also, it is interesting to note that the sound "n" as in "no" is developed before the sound "y" as in yes.

**TV and language.** Children may pick up a few words from TV or from DVDs such as "Baby Einstein" but any words picked up from TV will usually not be retained because in order to learn language children need the interaction of conversation. They need interaction to create meaning and relevance and you can't get that from TV.

**Don't interpret for your child** when other people can't understand him. Instead, expand and model as you would in a conversation. An example of this is when your child points to grandma's cookie jar and asks for a cookie but grandma doesn't understand, you would say, "I see, there are cookies in the cookie jar, they look good. Do you think grandma will let us have one? Let's say "cookie please" and see what she says. The "Let's say "cookie please" part of this brings the communication back to a conversation between the grandma and the child. The child is asking, being understood, and getting a response. You are modeling good manners and good language.

**Don't make your children talk.** They can learn manners when they are 4 or 5 and are old enough to get the social graces. We want polite children but we don't want to make them talk when they aren't comfortable talking. We want them to honor that inner compass that says, "I'm uncomfortable doing this". This generally happens with relatives and strangers. Strangers in grocery stores talk to our children and when they don't answer strangers often brand our child by saying, "He's shy". Your response, so that children know they don't have to be polite and talk to strangers is "He's not shy it looks like he doesn't want to talk right now" and if you are bold enough you can say, "He doesn't talk to strangers" or "He doesn't want to talk to you".

**Silence is golden.** So we don't need to be talking to or with our child continually in an attempt to build vocabulary. Children need opportunities to internalize language

and they often do this through imaginative play. Also, if we listen as they talk to themselves during imaginative play we get the gift of hearing their thoughts.

### **Warning Signs of a possible problem**

- If you're concerned about your child's speech and language development, here are some things to watch for. An **infant** who isn't responding to sound or who isn't vocalizing is of particular concern. **Between 12 and 24 months** - At 12 months a reason for concern is a child who isn't using gestures such as pointing or waving bye-bye. By 18 months a child who prefers using gestures over vocalizations to communicate or has trouble imitating sounds (this does not mean producing the sound correctly but trying to make the sound) or has difficulty understanding simple verbal instructions causes concern. Seek an evaluation if a child over 2 years old; can only imitate and doesn't produce words or phrases spontaneously, says only certain sounds or words repeatedly and can't use spoken language to communicate more than his immediate needs, can't follow simple instructions, has an unusual tone of voice which either sounds nasal or raspy or the child is more difficult to understand than expected for her age. Parents and regular adults in the child's life should understand about half of a child's speech at 2 and about three quarters at age 3. By age 4 a child should be mostly understood even by strangers. Amy Nelson, MA, CCC-SLP. A speech assessment and speech therapy for the most part should be an enjoyable experience. You and your child can expect a good relationship with your Speech and Language Pathologist.

Reference - "**Johnson's Learning to Talk**" text by professor James Law  
PBS Child Development Series

- **Delayed Speech or Language Development** Amy Nelson, MA, CCC-SLP

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**Birth-3 Months**

- Startles to loud sounds.
- Quiets or smiles when spoken to.
- Seems to recognize your voice and quiets if crying.
- Increases or decreases sucking behavior in response to sound.

**4-6 Months**

- Moves eyes in direction of sounds.
- Responds to changes in tone of your voice.
- Notices toys that make sounds.
- Pays attention to music.

**7 Months-1 Year**

- Enjoys games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake.
- Turns and looks in direction of sounds.
- Listens when spoken to.
- Recognizes words for common items like "cup," "shoe," "juice," "book."
- Begins to respond to requests ("Come here," "Want more?").

**1-2 Years**

- Points to a few body parts when asked.
- Follows single directions and understands simple questions ("Roll the ball," "Kiss the baby," "Where's your shoe?").
- Listens to simple stories, songs, and rhymes.
- Points to pictures in a book when named.

**2-3 Years**

- Understands differences in meaning ("go-stop," "in-on," "big-little," "up-down").
- Follows two requests ("Get the book and put it on the table").
- Listens to and enjoys hearing stories for longer periods of time.

**3-4 Years**

- Hears you when you call from another room.
- Hears television or radio at the same loudness level as other family members.
- Answers simple "who?", "what?", "where?", "why?" questions.

**4-5 Years**

- Pays attention to short stories and answers simple questions about them.
- Understands words that involve sequencing (first, next, last) and time (yesterday, today, tomorrow).

**Birth-3 Months**

- Makes pleasure sounds (cooing, gooing).
- Cries differently for different needs.
- Smiles when sees you.

**4-6 Months**

- Babbling sounds more speech-like with many different sounds, including *p*, *b*, and *m*.
- Chuckles and laughs.
- Vocalizes excitement and displeasure.
- Makes gurgling sounds when left alone and when playing with you.

**7 Months-1 Year**

- Babbling has both long and short groups of sounds such as "tata upup bibibibi."
- Uses speech or non-crying sounds to get and keep attention.
- Uses gestures to communicate (waving, holding arms to be picked up).
- Imitates different speech sounds.
- Has 1 or 2 words (hi, dog, dada, mama) around first birthday, although all sounds may not be clear.

**1-2 Years**

- Says more words every month.
- Uses some 1-2-word questions ("where kitty?" "go bye-bye?" "what's that?").
- Puts 2 words together ("more cookie," "no juice," "mommy book").
- Uses many different consonant sounds at the beginning of words.

**2-3 Years**

- Has a word for almost everything.
- Uses 2-3-words to talk about and ask for things.
- Uses *k*, *g*, *f*, *t*, *d*, and *n* sounds.
- Speech is understood by familiar listeners most of the time.
- Often asks for or directs attention to objects by naming them.

**3-4 Years**

- Talks about activities at school or at friends' homes.
- People outside family usually understand child's speech.
- Uses a lot of sentences that have 4 or more words.
- Usually talks easily without repeating syllables or words.

**4-5 Years**

- Uses sentences that give lots of details ("The biggest peach is mine").
- Tells stories that stick to topic.
- Communicates easily with other children and adults.