



## **A Snapshot of Typical Speech and Receptive and Expressive Language Development Milestones**

### **Birth – 6 months**

Reacts to loud noises  
Smiles in response to familiar voices  
Begins to turn head and eyes towards sounds  
Maintains brief eye contact during feeding  
Shows fear and angry voice  
Looks directly at speaker's face

Makes soft, throaty noises  
Vocalises pleasure by cooing, squealing and gurgling  
Enjoys taking turns vocalizing with parents  
Babbles by repeating series of same sounds  
Makes protest sounds when desired objects are removed  
Smiles and waves arms to continue a social exchange  
Begins to imitate sounds

### **7 months – 11 months**

Understands “no” and “not”  
Responds to his/her name  
Recognises mother/ father (and may miss them and cry if they leave)  
Responds to music with the body  
Responds to simple questions with searching movements (e.g. “Where’s your shoe?”)  
Begins to look at pictures being named  
Understands simple requests “up”, “hot”  
May look for family members (e.g. “Where’s mum/dad?”)  
Becomes interested in sounds outside immediate situation

Babbles more expressively (uses 2 syllable babble – mama, gaga)  
Imitates sounds – particularly the melody of speech  
“Converses” with people, toys, mirrors using jargon  
Plays speech – gesture games – peek a boo, pat a cake  
Uses some gesture language such as shaking head no, waving bye bye  
Imitates tongue clicks  
Vocalises to bring attention to himself/herself



### **12 - 18 months**

Listens with understanding to words (By 18 months understands up to 150 words)  
Recognises body parts (hair, eyes, mouth) when named  
Able to find a named object from another place upon request  
Understands simple on step commands  
Enjoys listening to rhymes and jingles

Uses from 3-20 single words meaningfully  
Omits final sounds of words frequently  
Answers questions (e.g. "What's this?")  
Imitates many new words  
Communicates primarily through true words and gesture  
Asks for more attempts to get objects by pointing and vocalisation

### **19 months – 2 years**

Follows a two stage command (e.g. "get the cat and dog")  
Understands simple yes/no questions  
Understands spatial concepts "in" and "on"  
Understands differences in personal pronouns (he, you me)  
Listens to meaning of language, not merely words

Uses two word phrases and short sentences (e.g. "mummy shoe")  
Imitates animal sounds and environmental sounds in play  
Uses "no" frequently  
Refers to self by name  
Speech more intelligible  
Asks questions by raising pitch at ends of words/phrases

### **2 years – 3 years**

Understands smaller body parts  
Understands actions in pictures  
Understands question forms who? What? Where?  
Likes to listen to stories  
Concepts of under, one, more, all understood  
Understands the function of objects (e.g. "what do we drink out of?")

Usually uses two to four word combinations (e.g. "go get it")  
Talks about an event that has just happened



Uses real sentences with grammatical functions (“can, will, is”)  
Speech is understood 60-80% of the time  
Asks for help with personal needs (toileting, getting dressed)

### **3 years – 4 years**

Follows two step directions involving 2 different actions (e.g. “take off your shoes and put them in the cupboard”)  
Understands many words (up to 3500 at 3 years old and 5000 at 4 years old)  
Understands concepts hard, soft, rough, smooth, front, back

Uses vocabulary of 1500 words  
Asks many Who? What? Where? Why questions  
Uses 4-5 word sentences most of the time  
Engages in detailed conversations  
Uses wide range of grammar (e.g. past tense, plurals, possessives)  
Some grammatical errors still occur

### **5 years +**

Identifies all primary colours  
Understands concepts same/ different/ first/ left/ right  
Understands abstract language concepts- last year, in the future, later  
Understands complex family relationships (who is my mother’s brother)

Understands and enjoys jokes and riddles  
Retells a brief story  
Compares objects  
More complex sentence structures emerge (phrases, clauses)