

# Speech and Language Developmental Milestones

## Witwer Children's Therapy

### Speech and Language Milestones in the First Five Years of Life

*It is important to note all children are unique in their development. The guidelines below can help you identify the need for a speech therapy referral from a physician.*

#### Age 0-6 Months

- Calmed by a familiar, friendly voice when fussy
- Looks toward new sounds/voices when heard
- Looks directly at a speaker's face when they are talking (eye contact)
- Vocalizes back when a voice is heard
- Laughs and smiles when playing
- Grunts or uses other sound to show displeasure
- Begins vocal play with squeals, growls, and yells
- At 4-6 months, the child uses simple consonant and vowel combinations such as "pah" or "ahm"

#### Age 6-12 Months

- Responds to "no"
- Responds to name
- Points to familiar object when the object's name is spoken (when you say ball, the child points to the ball)
- Copies simple actions of others
- Begins to follow simple requests such as "come here"
- At 7-9 months, repetitive syllable combinations emerge such as "mama" or "baba"
- At 10-12 months, different syllable combinations are used, such as "bameguh" or "tikati" (not true words)
- At 12 months says 2-3 words besides "mama" and "dada"

#### Age 1-2 Years

- Carries out 2-step requests, such as "get the ball and give it to me" with cueing as needed (like gestures or pointing)
- Points to familiar objects or people when asked
- Engages in pretend play
- Understands simple spatial concepts (in, on, up, down)
- Approximate words in speaking vocabulary: 10 words at age 15 months, to 200 words at age 2
- Sentence length is 1-2 words
- Understood by others approximately 25-50% of the time

*(Continued on back)*

## Age 2-3 Years

- Points to objects when described (“What do you wear on your head?” Child then points to hat)
- Identifies body parts and clothing
- Can identify actions in pictures (like swimming, running, etc.)
- Understands numbers (one, two), size (big, small) and time concepts (soon, later, wait)
- Approximate words in speaking vocabulary: 200 words at age 2 to 1,000 words at age 3
- Sentence length is 2-3 words or more
- Understood by others approximately 50-75% of the time
- Mastering sounds such as /p,m,h,n,w,b/

## Age 3-4 Years

- Follows 2 step directions without cues such as gestures, pointing and repeating
- Understands simple “wh” questions (who, what, where, when, why) relating to their current activities and environment
- Understands quantity (empty, a lot), equality (same, both), and positional (behind, in front) concepts
- Approximate words in speaking vocabulary: 1,000 words at age 3 to 1,600 words at age 4
- Sentence length is 3-4 words long
- Understood by others approximately 75% of the time
- Mastering sounds such as /k,g,d,t,ng,f,y,r,l,s/

## Age 4-5 Years

- Follows 3 step directions without cues such as gesturing, pointing and repeating
- Understands comparatives (big, bigger, biggest), time (yesterday, today, tomorrow) and positional (first, middle, last) concepts
- Approximate words in speaking vocabulary: 1,600 words at age 4 to 2,500 words at age 5
- Sentence length is 4 or more words in length
- Understood approximately 75-90% of the time
- Mastering sounds such as /ch, sh, z, j, v, th/

## Concerns Warranting Attention and Potential Referral to Speech Therapy:

### **By age 2 (20-24 months):**

- Child is not talking; no understandable words; not verbally imitating
- Child uses mostly vowel sounds for words

### **By age 3:**

- Speech is difficult to understand
- Omits beginning and/or final sounds of words
- Difficulty following directions
- Not producing sentences; significantly reduced vocabulary

### **By age 4:**

- Stuttering behaviors

### **By age 5:**

- Substitutes easy sounds for difficult ones
- Drops words, mixes up words or uses ungrammatical sentences

### **By age 7:**

- Child has difficulty with any speech sound

## References:

Information obtained from “LinguSystems Guide to Communication Milestones, Receptive-Expressive Emergent Language Test-Third Edition and Pro. Ed