



Important Communication Milestones

3 – 6 months

- Smiles spontaneously to human contact
- Smiles when playing alone
- Smiles at faces of several family members
- Stops crying when spoken to
- Shows different responses to different family members

6 – 9 months

- Responds to “Come here”
- Becomes more outgoing with familiar people
- Shows anxiety when separated from favorite caregiver
- Likes to be with specific people

9 – 12 months

- Reacts to others’ moods
- Is fearful of strangers
- Can tolerate momentary loss of contact with caregiver in unfamiliar places
- Shows off to get attention

12 – 18 months

- Has an expressive vocabulary of between 5 – 20 words
- Is aware of the value of communication
- Follows simple directions, especially with gesture
- Practices intonation, sometimes imitating an adult
- Uses mostly nouns with a few others, such as “down” or “up”
- Uses much, meaningful jargon with inflection and emotion

19 – 24 months

- Names common objects
- Uses two or three more prepositions such as “on,” “in,” or “under”
- Uses noun + verb consistently
- Family understands about 2/3 of what child says
- Receptive and expressive vocabulary is about 150-300 words
- Rhythm and fluency of speech is poor
- Uses “I,” “me,” and “you,” but may confuse “I” and “me”
- Control of pitch and volume is poor
- “My” and “mine” emerging (like a vengeance!)
- Follows commands, such as “Show me your nose”



25 – 36 months

- Uses "I," "you," and "me" correctly
- Uses some plurals and past tenses
- Knows principle body parts
- Uses three-word sentences
- Has about 900 words
- Family understands about 90% of what child says
- Verbs emerge quickly
- Understands and responds to questions dealing with immediate environment
- Tells about his experiences
- Can answer thinking questions, such as "What do you want when you're thirsty?"
- Gives name, age, and gender
- Understands much more than he expresses

4 years

- Knows names of animals
- Uses at least four prepositions
- Knows some colors
- Can repeat four digits when given slowly
- Can repeat a four-syllable word
- Knows contrasts such as "larger" and "longer"
- Follows directions when desired object is not in sight
- Repeats many words, phrases, syllables, and sounds
- Loves make-believe and takes on multiple roles during play
- Talks extensively during play by himself or with others

5 years

- Uses adjectives and adverbs extensively in conversation
- Knows opposites such as "on-off," "big-little," "heavy-light," and "soft-hard"
- Counts to ten
- All speech should be intelligible, but articulation errors may persist
- Can repeat sentences as long as nine words
- Can define common words, such as "shoe," "chair," "hat," and "bird"
- Can follow three-stage commands without help
- Understands simple time concepts, such as "morning," "later," and "tomorrow"
- Verbal language is generally correct
- Uses long sentences, including some compound and complex constructions

