



Speech & Language
Developmental Milestones
Birth – 48 months

By 6 months of age a child is *expected to*: (check items observed)

- Alert to loud noises in the environment.
- Turn his/her head toward familiar faces/voices.
- Maintain eye contact/gaze at people/objects of interest.
- Recognize own name
- Soothe or calm when spoken to
- Vocalize toward others
- Laugh, babble, demonstrate sound play
- Occasionally vocalize with three or more syllables
- Smile back at you when you smile

By 12 months of age a child is *expected to*:

- Use 2-3 words with some consistency
- Initiate speech/gesture games like pat-a-cake or peek-a-boo
- Occasionally follow simple commands
- Give or show toys or objects upon request
- Identify two body parts
- Say mama or dada meaningfully
- Begin to imitate names of familiar objects
- Respond to songs by vocalizing
- Smile and laugh while looking at you
- Exchange facial expressions, gestures and objects with you
- Use vowel sounds and consonants /w/m/p/b/

By 18 months of age a child is *expected* to:

- Use 15-20 words meaningfully
- Identify 6 body parts or clothing items
- Ask for “more”
- Point to, show and give objects, pictures & family members
- Frequently use the sounds t, d, w, h, n
- Attend to a book or a toy for 2 minutes
- Place one object inside of another
- Use gestures with words to get needs met
- Demonstrate simple pretend play (feeding a doll)

By 24 months of age a child is *expected* to:

- Gesture to indicate toileting needs
- Put away at least some toys upon request
- Follow 2-step related commands
- Use some two-word phrases
- Use at least 50 different words meaningfully
- Understand new words rapidly
- Understand at least 50 words
- Occasionally use 3-word phrases or sentences
- Understand more complex sentences like “*When we get to the store, I’ll buy you some ice cream.*”
- Use an expanding sound inventory to fit new words
- Look for familiar out of sight objects when asked

By 30 months of age a child is *expected* to:

- Pretend to write or type
- Play in parallel
- Point to action words in pictures
- Understand 4 objects by function (e.g. *What do you do with a spoon?*)
- Name and identify at least one color
- Use 2-3 word phrases or sentences
- Refer to self by pronoun consistently
- Count or repeat two or more numbers correctly in sequence

By 36 months of age a child is expected to:

- Pretend to act out caregiver routines
- Use one object to represent many objects
- Understand early prepositions (*in, on, under, beside*)
- Respond to wh- questions (who, where)
- Identify parts of an object (e.g. dog's tail)
- Ask questions and share interest in explanation of why things are and how things function
- Give both first and last names when asked
- Use all vowels and /h/n/k/g/d/
- Enjoy playing near or with other children of similar age

By 42 months of age a child is expected to:

- Recognize simple attributes of objects (quantity, color)
- Understand possessive pronouns (his, hers, theirs)
- Sustain conversation for several turns
- Request assistance and permission
- Use negative terms (can't, don't)
- Use personal pronouns (me, you, mine, yours)
- Use prepositional phrases (on the chair, under the bed)

By 48 months of age a child is expected to:

- Respond to yes/no questions with appropriate words/gestures
- Follow 2-3 step unrelated commands
- Understand complex or expanded sentences
- Describe what is happening in surroundings
- Use words to assign attributes to familiar objects (shape, color, size, texture)
- Use 3-4 word *complete* sentences
- Use the pronoun "I" instead of a given name
- Enjoy playing with other children of similar age
- Use the word "is" in sentences (Mom *is* watching)
- Produce /b/d/k/g/f/y and all vowels correctly in words and may have /t/y/f/ and /ing/

