



Typical Speech & Language Development
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Hello. My name is Carole Wymer, Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences at the University of Arizona. I am a clinically trained and certified Speech Language Pathologist and a member of the Talking Matters team. In this module, I will be talking about the typical stages of speech and language development. You will learn what to expect as your baby grows and develops sounds, words and meaningful communication.

In this video, you'll learn about the usual stages of language development for children from birth to five years of age.

We will not be addressing the development of individual speech sounds here, but we will touch upon the way speech typically emerges and what you should expect to hear as your child grows.

How children acquire language is mostly a mystery, but we do know that most typically developing children learn language in predictable stages. Within the ages and stages I will be describing here, keep in mind that there is a wide range of variability. Every child develops at a unique pace. You may want to keep track of your own child's development, and, with the help of this video, be ready to ask your pediatrician - or a speech-language pathologist who specializes in early childhood development - any questions or concerns you may have about the development of your child's speech and language.

From the moment you gaze into your baby's eyes the language dance begins.

Your baby looks at you and you look at him.

Your baby smiles and you smile back.

Your baby cries - and you respond.

You begin to recognize the subtle differences that signal your child's need to be fed or to be held or to simply get your attention. By 4 months of age your baby eagerly coos

And cries and each time your baby is calmed and relaxed by your response, their desire to communicate are enhanced.

The dance continues as your baby listens to every sound you make and begins to recognize frequently occurring sound combinations called words. Babies understand more words than they can say and begin to look toward objects or people as you name them. At 6 months old, your baby can recognize your voice, and familiar sounds in the environment like birds in the trees, airplanes overhead and favorite lullabies.

Somewhere between 6 to 9 months of age, your baby will begin to make sounds we call babbling. You'll hear baby making sounds that are easy to produce and they will repeat these combinations over and over until they begin to sound like real words, like "dada", "mama" and "baba". When you repeat the sounds your baby makes it lets him know that you're interested. Your baby gains pleasure from your attention and will take turns with you for greater periods of time, like the baby in this video:

Around 12-15 months of age your baby will say her first real word. And it will quickly blossom into 10 more. She'll play games like peek-a-boo with you and may even try to imitate a song you sing or the gestures that go with it. Baby will understand and respond to your request to give up a bottle or a toy. And now when your baby says "mama" or "dada," she knows exactly who she is calling. In this next example, watch and see how much this 15-month old understands and listen to what she can say.

Babies certainly understand more than they can say but between 18 and 24 months of age, their spoken vocabulary will grow by leaps and bounds. They will begin to put two words together and demonstrate what they know – simple combinations like "Daddy go" and "no shoe" will reveal not just the words they know but the concepts they are learning as well.

Children at this age will also begin to engage in simple pretend play, feeding a doll or talking on a toy phone, attaching words to their play in meaningful ways. As children begin stringing together words in meaningful ways, they will also start producing questions and other statements that will begin to sound more grown-up, like this boy.

By age 3, your child will expand pretend play to act out every day routines, usually ones he's watched you doing. He will ask you questions about how and why something works. And your child will begin to enjoy interacting with other children of similar ages. As friendships and interactions develop, learning how to use language to express care, frustration, acceptance and rejection will become **very** important. Modeling and practicing conflict resolution through language for your child is an excellent way to help them learn emotional self-regulation and navigate challenging interactions with others. Look for the Talk It Out link in the Learn More section of this module.

By 4 years old, your child will try out more complex sentences to convey new ideas. Your child will also understand increasingly complex instructions and give you accurate descriptions – combining at least 4 words – to talk about events in her life, movies she enjoys or her trip to the zoo with Grandma. These words will be easy to understand most of the time and nearly all of the sounds they use will be spoken clearly.

In five short years, your child's vocabulary will grow to nearly 2000 different words.

By the time your child is ready to start kindergarten; they'll easily tell others their first and last names and may even recite their address and phone number. They'll use a variety of words to tell you their favorite stories, with a definite beginning, middle and end, and begin to share exciting moments of their lives. They'll also eagerly listen as you talk to them for increasingly longer intervals, back and forth.

The development of language, a dance that develops intricately and mysteriously, quickly growing and changing over time and reflecting the experiences and rapid learning that occurs in a child's first five years of life. This critical language learning time sets the stage for what comes next, as your child sets off on a new and important journey to use language for learning.

I hope you have enjoyed this video and found this information useful. Please click on the *Learn More* section of this module for a list of speech and language developmental milestones and additional information. And if you have questions or concerns, please call us on the TALKLine.

Thank you for listening.

