

**NORMAL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**  
**Condensed from “Advanced Review of Speech-Language Pathology”, also American Speech and Hearing Association—**  
**very abbreviated (plus Katherine Mullen)**

Birth-6 months

-child responds to sound in environment, coos, smiles, responds to family members' names (4-6 months), beginning babbling, consonant/vowel combinations

By 12 months

-looks at common objects when they are named, follows a few simple commands like 'Give me the \_\_\_'.  
-babbling, playing with speech sounds and intonation  
-understands the names of 10 or more words  
-turns head when his/her name is said  
-intentional communication, responding to environmental sounds  
-first single words are said, sometimes a word can represent a phrase (“outside” can mean “Daddy’s outside”)

1-2 years

-around 18 months, putting 2 words together; a lot of words are nouns; produces 10-50 words, saying more words each month; understands about 200 words  
-understands language, following more directions  
-uses some verbs and adjectives, begins to know body parts  
-child begins to understand speaker/listener roles  
-demonstrates joint attention to an object or activity with another person

## 2-3 years

- ‘Average’ length of an utterance is 2-4 words; 36 months, sentences often average 3-4 words.
  - asks questions, is mostly understood by familiar listeners
  - at 30 months, comprehends about 2400 words.
  - expressive vocabulary (average) at 30 months:425 words
  - utterances have communicative intent
  - “communication includes criticism, commands, requests, threats, questions, and answers.”
- Says p,b,m,k,g,f,t,d,n, vowels

## 3-4 years

- easily understood by most listeners
- using more complex sentences
- comprehends up to 5600 words by 48 months
- uses 900-1000 words expressively
- asks more questions
- understands some opposites (hot, cold, etc.)
- may have developmental disfluencies (see section about stuttering under “About Us”)
- maintains a conversation
- role-playing, fantasies

## 4-5 years

- able to make herself/himself understood
- says most sounds correctly, except l,s,v,z,ch,sh
- averages 6-6.5 words per sentence by age 5
- speaks in complete, grammatically correct sentences mostly
- uses comparatives (bigger, nicer), ‘why’, ‘how’
- should speak smoothly without repeating words and syllables
- can define 10 common words

- expressive vocabulary of 1500-2000 words
- understands about 9,600 words by age 5
- can name items in a category ('tell me 5 foods..')

### 5-6 years

- most children say all sounds correctly, some do not have /r/,/th/, some blends
- average length of sentence 6-8 words
- uses present, past, future tenses consistently
- asks 'how' questions
- knows most common opposites
- uses 'if' sentences
- comprehends 13,000-15,000 words by age 6
- knows functions of body parts, common objects
- understands humor, surprise
- can retell a simple story
- beginning to read and write
- rhyming words

### 6-7 Years

- be easily understood, fluent speech
- grammar gets more complex, adult-like
- reading simple books
- follows 2-3 step directions in sequence
- asking and answering 'wh' questions (who, what, where, when, why, how)
- takes turns in conversation
- stays on topic
- making steady progress in reading and writing

### 7-8 Years

- all speech sounds of the language are mastered

- easily understood, fluent speech
- give 3-4 step directions
- clarify messages, explaining ideas
- understanding some figurative language
- continuing to grow in reading and writing (on-grade level in school)
- answering more complex yes/no questions
- connected speech sounds more adult-like

### 8-9 Years

- speaks clearly and fluently
- understanding grade-level material
- participating in group discussions
- explaining what has been learned
- full mastery of basic phonics
- writes stories
- asks and answers questions about stories and nonfiction material as well as everyday situations

### 9-10 Years

- states ideas clearly
- forms opinions based on evidence
- uses extensive vocabulary appropriate to situation
- uses language effectively for a variety of purposes
- understands figurative language
- speaks clearly and fluently
- gives accurate directions
- understands social language