

Language Development In Children

This page presents information on the development of language in children. The chart below presents typical language development. There is a wide range of normal development. Most children will not follow the chart to the letter. It is presented so you will know what to expect for your child. If your child seems significantly behind in language development, you should talk with your child's physician regarding your questions and concerns.

Language Development Chart

Age of Child	Typical Language Development
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6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocalization with intonation • Responds to his name • Responds to human voices without visual cues by turning his head and eyes • Responds appropriately to friendly and angry tones
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12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses one or more words with meaning (this may be a fragment of a word) • Understands simple instructions, especially if vocal or physical cues are given • Practices inflection • Is aware of the social value of speech
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18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has vocabulary of approximately 5-20 words • Vocabulary made up chiefly of nouns • Some echolalia (repeating a word or phrase over and over) • Much jargon with emotional content • Is able to follow simple commands
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24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can name a number of objects common to his surroundings • Is able to use at least two prepositions, usually chosen from the following: in, on, under • Combines words into a short sentence—largely noun-verb combinations (mean) length of sentences is given as 1.2 words • Approximately 2/3 of what child says should be intelligible Vocabulary of approximately 150-300 words • Rhythm and fluency often poor • Volume and pitch of voice not yet well-controlled • Can use two pronouns correctly: I, me, you, although me and I are often confused • My and mine are beginning to emerge
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- Responds to such commands as “show me your eyes (nose, mouth, hair)”

36 Months

- Use pronouns I, you, me correctly
- Is using some plurals and past tenses
- Knows at least three prepositions, usually in, on, under
- Knows chief parts of body and should be able to indicate these if not name
- Handles three word sentences easily
- Has in the neighborhood of 900-1000 words
- About 90% of what child says should be intelligible
- Verbs begin to predominate
- Understands most simple questions dealing with his environment and activities
- Relates his experiences so that they can be followed with reason
- Able to reason out such questions as “what must you do when you are sleepy, hungry, cool, or thirsty?”
- Should be able to give his sex, name, age
- Should not be expected to answer all questions even though he understands what is expected

48 Months

- Knows names of familiar animals
- Can use at least four prepositions or can demonstrate his understanding of their meaning when given commands
- Names common objects in picture books or magazines
- Knows one or more colors
- Can repeat 4 digits when they are given slowly
- Can usually repeat words of four syllables
- Demonstrates understanding of over and under
- Has most vowels and diphthongs and the consonants p, b, m, w, n well established
- Often indulges in make-believe
- Extensive verbalization as he carries out activities
- Understands such concepts as longer, larger, when a contrast is presented
- Readily follows simple commands even though the stimulus objects are not in sight
- Much repetition of words, phrases, syllables, and even sounds

60 Months

- Can use many descriptive words spontaneously-both adjectives and adverbs
- Knows common opposites: big-little, hard-soft, heavy-light, etc
- Has number concepts of 4 or more
- Can count to ten
- Speech should be completely intelligible, in spite of articulation problems
- Should have all vowels and the consonants, m,p,b,h,w,k,g,t,d,n,ng,y (yellow)
- Should be able to repeat sentences as long as nine words

- Should be able to define common objects in terms of use (hat, shoe, chair)
- Should be able to follow three commands given without interruptions
- Should know his age
- Should have simple time concepts: morning, afternoon, night, day, later, after, while
- Tomorrow, yesterday, today
- Should be using fairly long sentences and should use some compound and some complex sentences
- Speech on the whole should be grammatically correct

**6
Years**

- In addition to the above consonants these should be mastered: f, v, sh, zh, th, l
- He should have concepts of 7
- Speech should be completely intelligible and socially useful
- Should be able to tell one a rather connected story about a picture, seeing relationships
- Between objects and happenings

**7
Years**

- Should have mastered the consonants s-z, r, voiceless th, ch, wh, and the soft g as in George
- Should handle opposite analogies easily: girl-boy, man-woman, flies-swims, blunt-sharp short-long, sweet-sour, etc
- Understands such terms as: alike, different, beginning, end, etc
- Should be able to tell time to quarter hour
- Should be able to do simple reading and to write or print many words

**8
Years**

- Can relate rather involved accounts of events, many of which occurred at some time in the past
- Complex and compound sentences should be used easily
- Should be few lapses in grammatical constrictions-tense, pronouns, plurals
- All speech sounds, including consonant blends should be established
- Should be reading with considerable ease and now writing simple compositions
- Social amenities should be present in his speech in appropriate situations
- Control of rate, pitch, and volume are generally well and appropriately established
- Can carry on conversation at rather adult level
- Follows fairly complex directions with little repetition
- Has well developed time and number concepts