

age 2 to 3rd birthday

- combines words in 2-3 word sentences such as "me do it"
- follows simple directions eg. "put the teddy-bear to bed"
- answers simple questions eg. "what's your name?", "which one is the big doll?"
- can put a toy "in", "on", "under" when asked
- answers simple questions about objects eg. "which one do we eat with?"

warning signs

- does your child show frustration when trying to talk?
- do you have difficulty understanding your child's speech?
- does your child put 2 words together?

age 3 to 4th birthday

- follows 2 related directions eg. "close the book and give it to me"
- tells first and last name
- understands questions about a picture story eg. "Where did the bunny go?"
- reasons - answers "What do you do when you're hungry/cold?"
- tells a short story eg. "two kids played ball"
- sentences are usually 3 and 4 words long
- gives directions such as "Fix this for me"
- asks many questions: "what", "where", "why"

warning signs

- is your child's speech difficult to understand?
- are your child's speech skills not at age level described?

age 4 to 5th birthday

- follows 3 related directions such as "get your crayons, make a picture and give it to the baby"
- speaks sounds accurately except perhaps for eg. l, r, s, k, th, ch, sh, th
- more reasoning - answers questions such as "What do you do when you are sleepy/thirsty?" or "What should you do if you hurt yourself?"
- describes objects and events
- can show you "top", "bottom" and several colours
- can give meanings of words

warning signs

- does your child not use complete sentences?
- does your child stutter?
- does your child not seem to be able to follow directions?

Early detection of difficulties at any age can make learning to talk easier. If your child shows any of the warning signs listed for his or her age group, please contact the Speech-Language Pathologist at your Local Health Unit for more information.

Will I grow out of it?

Milestones and Warning Signs for Speech and Language Development Birth to 5 Years

first 3 months of life

- becomes startled at loud noises
- is soothed by calm, gentle voices
- likes to cuddle and enjoys being held
- cries, gurgles, grunts, says "ah"
- has strong muscles in cheeks and tongue

warning signs

- shows no reaction to sound?

4 months to 6 months

- watches your face with interest when you talk
- tries to "talk" to you
- enjoys "talking" with you, smiles at you
- coos and squeals for attention
- has a special cry when hungry

warning signs

- are any of the above behaviours absent?

6 months to 1st birthday

- understands some common words when used with gestures eg. "bye, bye", "up", "give me" and own name
- tries to say sounds and words - "ba, ba", "na, na"
- tries to sing along with radio/tv
- laughs and may imitate a cough

warning signs

- are you concerned about your child's responsiveness or babbling?
- does your child have recurrent ear infections?

age 1 to 18 months

- babbles - sounds like sentences
- understands simple questions/statements eg. "where is your nose?", "give me"
- says words (not clearly)
- nods "yes" and shakes head for "no"
- enjoys rhythm and likes to "dance" to music

warning signs

- does your child not talk at all?
- is your child sociable?

18 months to 2nd birthday

- says some 2-word sentences such as "more milk", "all gone", "me go"
- asks for a cookie or toy
- says "whatssat" a lot at about age 2
- understands "where is mommy/daddy?"
- understands simple directions "get your coat"
- understands more words than can speak/say

warning signs

- does your child use more gestures than words?
- are you concerned about your child's ability to talk and/or understand?