



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Turns head to sound, responds to voices
- Watches a speaker's face
- Social smile emerges by 2 months
- Vowel sounds and cooing emerge around 2 months

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Talk, read, and sing to your baby from birth throughout the first year
- Practice parentese- talking with a slow rate, higher pitch, and stretched vowel sounds
- Spend time face-to-face talking with your baby

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP** At 3 months: not responding to environmental sounds, not tracking moving objects with eye gaze



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Enjoys social games and playful interactions with the caregiver
- Takes turns vocalizing
- Makes eye contact with people talking to them
- Cooing, vowel sounds, yelling, squealing, and shrieking
- CV syllable shapes with /p, b, m/ sounds, ex: puh, bah, muh

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Play people games- peek-a-boo, so big!, tickles, and lap bounces
- Play games or do lap bounces that let them anticipate what is going to happen next
- Encourage your baby to take turns vocalizing by imitating the sounds they make
- After you make a sound, pause and look at your baby to see if they will take a turn and go back and forth with you
- Try to interpret any attempts your baby makes to communicate and respond accordingly

### TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP

At 6 months: no social smile, no cooing or vowel sounds, not turning toward environmental sounds, doesn't look at someone speaking to them



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Reduplicated babbling (ex: mamama)
- Understands a few words and phrases
- Imitates some simple actions and sounds
- Joint attention emerges
- Responds to name when called
- Communicates with vocalizations and eye contact, may use some early gestures (ex: reaching for items, pushing things away)

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Follow your child's lead; label the things they want and comment on what they show interest in
- Create simple and repetitive phrases for the activities you do each day (ex: "time to eat!", "put on your shoes")
- Pair simple sound effects with actions in play (ex: "dududu" while you hit a drum)
- Play on the floor and sit face-to-face
- Encourage your baby to take turns with you while you model simple actions and sounds in play

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP** At 9 months: limited eye contact, no consonant sounds, does not show enjoyment playing with their caregiver, does not respond to name



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Babbling with a variety of consonant and vowels sounds
- Pointing and using other early gestures like waving and clapping
- Understands ~50 words and phrases
- Imitates simple actions with nursery songs
- Says one word by 12 months

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Use your child's nonverbal communication to model language in context (ex: points to crackers, you say "crackers" or "I want crackers")
- Sing nursery songs and do the hand motions together
- Model gestures like waving, pointing, clapping, and shaking your head no.
- Introduce some simple sign language including "eat", "more", "help", and "all done"
- Make a silly sound in play, then pause and look to see if they will imitate you

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP** At 12 months: no babbling, no response to name, not using any gestures like reaching, waving, and pointing



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Says 5-10 words
- Babbles in sentence-like strands with adult intonation
- Uses 10 or more gestures (ex: waves, points, claps, reaches to be picked up, smacks lips to eat)
- Imitates sounds in play (ex: moo, vrrm, aww, choo choo!)
- Follows one-step directions with adult help and prompts (ex: "give it to me", "come here")

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Treat your child's babbling as though they are saying real words and respond accordingly
- Model sounds for animals, cars, and exclamations like "whoa!" and "uh-oh" while you play together
- Make a first words book with real pictures of your child's favorite people, food, and toys
- Use gestures and show your baby what to do when you practice giving them simple directions like "give me the \_\_\_\_", "go get your \_\_\_\_", and "put it in"

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP** At 15 months: not saying any words, not using at least three consonant sounds (p, b, m, t, d, w, h, n), not showing understanding of common words and phrases



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Says 20-50 words
- Speech is ~25% intelligible
- Imitates simple words (ex: ball, mama, dada, up, boo!)
- Points to identify common vocabulary including body parts
- Follows one-step directions independently

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Model simple words for your child and pause and look at them to see if they will imitate you. Don't try more than two times!
- Have your child join in on simple chores; they love imitating what you are doing at this age!
- Practice one-step directions in daily routines (ex: get your shoes, wipe your face)
- Take time to teach them common vocabulary including clothing, body parts, animals, and household items

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP** At 18 months: not using at least 10 words, not following simple directions, not imitating simple actions and sounds



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Says 50-200 words
- Speech is 25-50% intelligible
- Answers simple questions and selects an item when given a choice of two
- Combines words for phrases
- Uses words more than gestures to communicate
- Follows simple two-step directions

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Teach them to communicate for a variety of purposes; model the words they need to refuse, protest, request, comment on their environment, ask questions, show things, and gain attention
- Help your child follow one and two-step directions as you complete tasks together
- Expand on what your child says by adding one word and repeating it back to them (ex: child says, "car", you say, "go car")
- Teach your child to make choices by holding up two items and letting them pick; give choices for food, pajamas, and toys

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP** At 24 months: using less than 50 words, using less than 5 consonant sounds (ex: p, b, m, t, d, h, n, w), not following one-step directions like "get your jacket".



# GUIDE TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## MILESTONES

- Uses phrases and sentences that are 2-4 words long on average
- Robust spoken vocabulary with many nouns, verbs, descriptive words, and words for simple concepts (ex: in, out, up, down)
- Speech is 50-75% intelligible
- Asks and answers simple questions (ex: Who, What, Where, & What Doing?)
- Understands increasingly complex directions that include concepts like "on", "off", "big", "little", and "under"

## ACTIVITIES & TIPS

- Ask questions about the pictures in a book (ex: "Who is on the train?" "What is the dog doing?")
- If you ask your child a question and they aren't able to answer, model the answer for them (ex: "Who says woof woof?"...child does not respond..."It's the dog!")
- If your child says a word incorrectly, repeat it back to them the correct way without explicitly correcting them
- Play games where you hide toys and look for them, talk about where you find them using concept words like "on", "under" and "in".

**TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR & REACH OUT TO AN SLP** Using more gestures than words, still babbling, not combining words for phrases, not able to follow directions with simple concepts, speech is less than 50% understandable