

Speech and Language Milestones

These milestones are provided as examples of what an average child might accomplish within various age brackets. This is only meant as a guide. If you have concerns, contact your child's pediatrician or schedule a free screening with PhysioKids.

A child should be doing the following at age 2:

- Understands simple questions and commands
- Can identify body parts
- Names things, persons and situations in their language
- Can carry on a "conversation" with self and dolls
- Will ask "what's this?", "what's that?" and "where's my?"
- Creates sentences of 2-3 words
- Refers to themselves by names
- Uses two word negative phrases such as "not go," "not right," "no want"
- Has a minimum of 50 words, but up to 300 words in speaking vocabulary
- Listens to stories with pictures

A child should be doing the following at 2 ½:

- Has a 450 word vocabulary
- Gives their first name upon request
- Refers to self as "me" rather than by name
- Tries to get adult attention: "watch me"
- Uses "no" or "not" in speech and may say "no" when means "yes"
- Talks to other children as well as adults
- Begins to control behavior verbally rather than just physically
- Uses short 3-4 word sentences to announce what they have done or would like to do, "Me do it," or "Me want to jump"

A child should be doing the following at age 3:

- Understands "yesterday," "summer," "lunchtime," "tonight," "little-big"
- Begins to obey prepositional phrases like "put the block under the chair"
- Can tell a story or relay an idea to someone
- Has a sentence length of 3-4 words
- Can consistently produce "m, n, ng, p, f, h and w"
- May repeat sounds, words and phrases, which is perfectly normal at this age
- Can sing songs

A child should be doing the following at age 4:

- Points to colors red, blue, yellow and green
- Identifies crosses, triangles, circles and squares
- Follows commands even through objects are not present
- Asks **many** questions although more interested in how answers fit their own thoughts rather than the explanation
- Has sentence lengths a minimum of 4-5 words
- Asks "who?" and "why?"
- Begins to use complex sentences
- Uses contractions such as "it's a" or "there's a"
- Uses past tenses correctly
- Uses the following sounds correctly: m, n, ng, p, f, h, w, y, k, b, d, g, r.

A child should be doing the following at age 5:

- Defines objects by their use (you eat with a fork) and can tell what objects are made of
- Knows spatial relations like "on top," "behind," "far" and "near"
- Knows their address
- Has sentence lengths of 5-6 words
- Has a vocabulary of around 2000 words
- Uses all speech sounds correctly with the possible exceptions of t, v, l, th, z, and zh (as in "measure")
- Knows common opposites like "big/little" and "hard/soft"
- Understands "same" and "different"
- Counts ten objects
- Uses future, present and past tenses
- Stays with one activity for 12-13 minutes
- Questions for information
- Uses all types of sentences, some of which will be complex, for example "I can go in the house after I take off my muddy shoes."