

Communication Milestones

0-3 years old



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Welcome to our guide on communication milestones. As speech-language pathologists, we often get asked about what skills little ones should be doing for their age. We hope this information can help you keep track of your child's development!

Please note that communication milestones provide a range of skills for your little one's age. Children develop at their own rate and time. What is important is that your little one meets most milestones by the end of their age range.

For example, if your little one is 6 months and meeting all the milestones listed for 0-6 months except 1 or 2 skills, they are on track and likely still developing those few skills. So what is essential is that your little one continually gains new skills!



Communication Milestones

0-12 months old

0-3 MONTHS

- makes cooing sounds
- different cries for different needs
- smiles when you appear
- quiets or smiles when spoken to
- begins to recognize your voice

4-6 MONTHS

- coos
- begins to babble sounds
- moves eyes in the direction of sounds
- makes sounds when happy or upset
- giggles or laughs
- responds to changes in your voice
- notices that toys make sound
- watches speakers face when spoken to

7-12 MONTHS

- babbles strings of sounds
"babababa"
"magada"
- uses sounds + gestures to communicate wants + needs
- points to objects
- imitates different speech sounds
- says 1-2 words (usually around 12 months)
- turns and looks in the direction of sounds



Communication Milestones

12 - 24 months old

12-15 MONTHS

- uses at least 3-5 words by 15 months
- uses intentional gestures, like shaking head no, pointing or clapping
- plays simple social games with you, like peek-a-boo
- waves hi or bye
- understands words for common items and people
- looks when you point to something
- responds when you call their name

15-18 MONTHS

- follows one-step direction like "hug the baby"
- uses at least 10 words by 18 months
- says and shakes head "no"
- imitates your actions and gestures
- starts to name pictures in books ("baa" for "sheep" or "pih" for "pig")
- points to show someone what they want

18-24 MONTHS

- uses many new words
- begins to put two words together
- responds to simple questions
- points to basic body parts when asked
- refers to self by name
- talks to self during play
- engages in longer conversations with others
- begins to understand time concepts of soon, later, wait



Communication Milestones

24 - 36 months

24-30 MONTHS

- is understood more than 50% of the time
- uses location words, such as on, in and under
- begins to label pictures in books
- understands new words quickly
- enjoys listening to songs or books
- puts together 2-3 words when talking
- uses verb with -ing when talking
- begins to follow 2-step directions

30-36 MONTHS

- has a word for most things
- says pronouns like "I," "me," "we," and "you," and some plurals
- asks "why?" to indicate curiosity
- uses k, g, f, t, d, and n in words
- understands opposites like "up and down"
- is understood at least 75% of the time
- uses 4-5 word sentences when talking

