

## Language Milestones 0 – 5 years

- Milestones inform us of the average skill level that is being achieved at the given age.
- Expected abilities continue across the milestone band and it is not expected that all the skills listed are achieved by the given age.
- Every child develops differently, and you often see preferences in developmental areas.
- Development becomes a concern if the child's level is well below what is expected (and these are identified as 'red flags)', or if their development is delayed across multiple areas.

### 3 months

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cry</li> <li>• Laugh</li> <li>• Take turns in vocalising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to sounds</li> <li>• Respond to mother's voice</li> <li>• Search for sounds with eyes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not turn taking</li> <li>• No variation in sounds</li> <li>• Poor or no response to sounds</li> </ul>

### 6 months

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make four or more distinct sounds</li> <li>• Laugh in response to something</li> </ul> <p><b>Babbling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 months – Reduplicated babbling (e.g. "ba-ba")</li> <li>• 8 months – Variegated babbling (e.g. "ba-de")</li> <li>• 10 months – Complex babbling (e.g. "ba-da-ma")</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for sound by turning head</li> <li>• Change their behaviour when listening to sound as opposed to human conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not much variation in sounds being made</li> <li>• Limited social use of sound (e.g. not responsive, no turn-taking, no laughter)</li> <li>• Not interested in sound or unable to turn to sound</li> </ul>

### 12 months

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting to use sounds and gestures</li> <li>• Communicate mostly by actions and gestures</li> <li>• Copy different sounds and noises</li> <li>• Try to "talk" to listeners</li> <li>• Coo, squeal or shout for attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand 10 words</li> <li>• Recognise words for familiar people and objects</li> <li>• Respond to their name and to "no"</li> <li>• Recognise greetings and gestures</li> <li>• Make eye contact</li> <li>• Listen with increased interest</li> <li>• Begin to respond to simple requests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No communication other than crying</li> <li>• Not using or understanding simple gestures</li> <li>• Not producing a variety of sounds</li> </ul>

## 18 months

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Say 6 to 20 words – Some easier to understand than others but becoming more consistent</li> <li>● Copy lots of words and noises</li> <li>● Name a few body parts</li> <li>● Starting to ask simple questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand up to 50 words and some short phrases</li> <li>● Follow simple instructions</li> <li>● Understand simple questions</li> <li>● Point to familiar objects when named</li> <li>● Starting to make intentional choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not making attempts to communicate in a variety of ways (e.g. vocalisations, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures)</li> <li>● Not able to follow simple directions</li> </ul>

## 2 years

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Say more than 50 single words</li> <li>● Starting to put two words together</li> <li>● Use tone to ask a question</li> <li>● Say “no” when they do not want something</li> <li>● Engage in verbal turn taking</li> <li>● Pair gestures and words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Follow simple two-part instructions</li> <li>● Respond to simple wh-questions</li> <li>● Point to several body parts and pictures when named</li> <li>● Listen to songs and rhymes and try to join in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rely on yelling, grunting or incoherent utterances</li> <li>● Use the same 'word' to represent many different things</li> <li>● Unable to name most familiar items</li> <li>● No clear 'yes/no' response</li> <li>● Show inconsistent response to words or directions</li> <li>● Become easily frustrated during communication exchanges</li> </ul>

## 3 years

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Say approximately 1000 words</li> <li>● Say four to five words in a sentence</li> <li>● Use a variety of words for names, actions, locations and descriptions</li> <li>● Ask questions</li> <li>● Talk about things in the past</li> <li>● Engage in increasingly longer dialogues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Follow more complex two-part instructions</li> <li>● Understand simple wh-questions</li> <li>● Sort items into groups</li> <li>● Understand verbs and recognise some basic colours</li> <li>● Listen with interest to general conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overly dependent on others for communication</li> <li>● Persists in babbling</li> <li>● Clarity of speech decreases during longer sentences</li> <li>● Don't easily pick up new words</li> <li>● Unable to follow more complex directions</li> <li>● Lack interest or don't remember familiar stories or songs</li> </ul>

## 4 years

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Use words such as 'and' and 'because' to make longer sentences</li><li>● Starting to use grammar</li><li>● Ask lots of questions</li><li>● Use personal pronouns</li><li>● Can sing familiar songs</li><li>● Count to five and name a few colours</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Answer most questions</li><li>● Understand basic concepts</li><li>● Understand most wh-questions</li><li>● Starting to begin to learn from listening</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Only communicating with short phrases</li><li>● Difficulties finding words to express thoughts</li><li>● Speech is not understandable by familiar listeners</li><li>● Take a long time to understand others</li></ul>

## 5 years

Expressive Language	Receptive Language	Red Flags
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Use well-formed sentences</li><li>● Take turns in increasingly longer conversations</li><li>● Tell short, simple stories</li><li>● Use past and future verbs correctly</li><li>● Speak of imaginary conditions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Follow three-part instructions</li><li>● Understand time related words</li><li>● Start thinking about the meaning of words when learning</li><li>● Hear and understand most of what is said</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Speaking only in simple sentences</li><li>● Difficulties in telling stories</li><li>● Speech is not understandable by others</li><li>● Difficulties answering questions</li><li>● Difficulties following complex directions</li><li>● Difficulties interacting with peers</li></ul>