

Important Milestones: Normal Language Development

Introduction

Parents of young children are always concerned about whether or not their child is developing along normal stages. One of the major developmental milestones for children is language development. Without a frame of reference, a parent may make false assumptions and create unnecessary anxiety over the language development of his/her child. This ***Parent Conference Handout*** will provide you with a developmental frame of reference for language from Birth to 5 years old.

As mentioned in previous handouts involving milestones, children develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when yours will learn a given skill. The developmental milestones below will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, but don't be alarmed if your child takes a slightly different course.

Birth to 6 months

- first form of communication is crying
- babies also make sounds of comfort such as coos, and gurgles
- Babbling soon follows as a form of communication
- vowel sounds are produced
- no meaning is attached to the words heard from others

6 to 12 months

- the babies voice begins to rise and fall while making sounds
- child begins to understand certain words
- may respond appropriately to the word "no" or own name
- child may perform an action when asked
- child may repeat words said by others

12 to 18 months

- child has learned to say several words with appropriate meaning
- child is able to tell what he/she wants by pointing
- child responds to simple commands

18 to 24 months

- great spurt in the acquisition and use of speech at this stage
- child begins to combine words
- child begins to form words into short sentences

2 to 3 years

- at this age the child talks
- they will ask questions
- child has vocabulary of about 900 words
- child participates in conversation
- child can identify colors
- child can use plurals
- child can tell simple stories
- child begins to use some consonant sounds

3 to 4 years

- child begins to speak more rapidly
- child begins to ask questions to obtain information
- sentences are longer and more varied
- can complete simple analogies

4 to 5 years

- average vocabulary of over 1500 words
- sentences average 5 words in length
- able to modify speech
- child is able to define words
- child can use conjunctions
- child can recite poems and sing songs from memory