



# Children & Communication Milestones

By Delaney Sadler, OSCAR Care Group Speech Pathologist

Speech pathologists are health professionals that work with both children & adults. Speech pathologists can help children with difficulty communicating or difficulties with eating & drinking.

There are certain milestones that indicate your child is typically developing outlined below. These markers show how your child understands what you say as well as how they are talking. If a child is not meeting these milestones, parents should get a referral to a Speech Pathologist (ask a doctor, childcare educator or maternal and child health nurse to assist).



Age	Understanding	Talking
12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand about 10 words</li> <li>Respond to their name</li> <li>Recognise hello &amp; goodbye</li> <li>Recognise familiar objects &amp; people</li> <li>Make eye contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use sounds, gestures &amp; say a few words</li> <li>Make strings of sounds</li> <li>Copy different sounds &amp; noises</li> </ul>
18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand about 50 words</li> <li>Understand short, simple phrases</li> <li>Follow one-step instructions (e.g. give me the toy)</li> <li>Point to familiar objects when named</li> <li>Point to some pictures in familiar books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Say 6-20 words</li> <li>Words should be becoming easier to understand &amp; more meaningful</li> <li>Copy words &amp; noises</li> <li>Name a few body parts</li> <li>Use objects in pretend play (e.g.</li> </ul>
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow simple, two-part instructions (e.g. give me the toy &amp; the ball)</li> <li>Respond to what &amp; where questions</li> <li>Point to several body parts or pictures in books when named</li> <li>Understand 'in' &amp; 'on'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Say more than 50 words</li> <li>Put two words together (e.g. more juice)</li> <li>Use tone of voice to ask a question</li> <li>Say no to show they don't want something</li> <li>Use most vowel sounds &amp; a range of consonant sounds</li> <li>Start to use 'mine' &amp; 'my'</li> </ul>

3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow more complex two-part instructions (e.g. give me your cup &amp; eat the biscuit)</li> <li>Understand 'what', 'where' &amp; 'who' questions</li> <li>Understand 'same' &amp; 'different'</li> <li>Sort items into groups when asked (e.g. toys vs foods)</li> <li>Start recognising colours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use sentences of 4-5 words</li> <li>Use a variety of words, including names, actions, locations &amp; descriptions</li> <li>Ask questions using 'what', 'where' &amp; 'who'</li> <li>Talk about something in the past (may not have the grammar of this correct)</li> <li>Have a conversation (although will likely have difficulty with taking turns &amp; staying on topic)</li> <li>Use sounds 'p, b, m, d, n, h, t, k, g, w, ng 'as in sing', f, y'</li> </ul>
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer familiar questions (e.g. where do we keep your shoes?)</li> <li>Understand most wh-questions, including ones about recent stories</li> <li>Understand some numbers</li> <li>Start showing an awareness that some words start or finish with the same sounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use connecting words to make sentences longer (e.g. &amp;, but, because)</li> <li>Describe recent events (e.g. what they did this morning)</li> <li>Ask lots of questions</li> <li>Use personal pronouns (e.g. he/she, me/you)</li> <li>Use negations (e.g. don't, can't)</li> <li>Count to five</li> <li>Name a few colours</li> <li>Sounds 'l, j, ch, s, v, sh, z'</li> </ul>
5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow three-part instructions (e.g. put your shoes on, get your backpack &amp; hop in the car)</li> <li>Understand time related words (e.g. before, after, now, later)</li> <li>Start thinking about the meaning of words when learning</li> <li>Begin to recognise some letters, sounds &amp; numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use well-formed sentences</li> <li>Be understood by most people</li> <li>Take turns in increasingly longer conversations</li> <li>Tell simple, short stories with a beginning, middle &amp; end</li> <li>Use past &amp; future tense</li> <li>Use most speech sounds</li> <li>Sounds 'r, zh as in measure, th'</li> </ul>



### Does a child in your care have Communication or Swallowing difficulties?

This article was written by OSCAR Care Group Speech Pathologist, Delaney Sadler. Please call or email us via our contact details below with any questions.



#### References:

- McLeod, S., & Crowe, K. (2018). Children's consonant acquisition in 27 languages: A cross-linguistic review.
- The Communication Trust. Universally speaking: The ages & stages of children's communication development from birth - 5 yrs.
- The Communication Trust (2014). Early identification and why it's important for pupils in your school.
- Paul, R., and Norbury, C. F. (2012). Language disorders from infancy through adolescence
- Pepper, J., and Weitzman, E. (2004). It Takes Two to Talk: A Practical Guide for Parents of Children with Language Delays
- Roth, F., and Worthington, C. (2011). Treatment resource manual for speech-language pathology