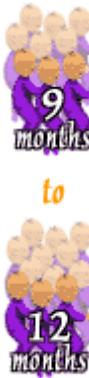


Communications Skills

Long before children can say words or join them into sentences, they are active language learners. Within a few short years, young children go from newborns without language to excellent communicators and lively inventors and tellers of stories.

Age	Milestones
	<p>From the very start, infants pay close attention to language. In the first year, they can distinguish all of the speech sounds that occur in natural language; then they begin to specialize in the sounds of their home language. Most infants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to speech by looking at the speaker • Respond differently to the voice of a parent than to other voices • React to changes in a speaker's tone, pitch, volume, and intonation • Respond differently to their home language and another language • Communicate with bodily movements, by crying, babbling, and laughing • Attempt to imitate sounds
	<p>Even small babies love to have "conversations." Most children of this age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange sounds, facial expressions, or gestures with a parent or caregiver • Listen to conversations • Repeat some vowel and consonant sounds
	<p>Children's vocalizations increase. Most babies of this age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin repetitive babbling (deaf children also start to babble with their hands) • Associate gestures with simple words and two-word phrases, like "hi" and "bye-bye" • Use vocal and non-vocal communication to express interest and influence others

Age	Milestones
 <p>9 months to 12 months</p>	<p>Children are getting ready to talk. Around the first birthday, language production doubles. Many babies of this age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the names of familiar people and objects • Show their understanding with responsive body language and facial expressions • Say a few words • Respond to a firm "no" by stopping what they are doing
 <p>1 year to 2 years</p>	<p>Children begin to learn many new words and begin to use simple phrases. Many children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand many words, as well as simple phrases and directions ("Drink your juice") • Follow a series of two simple but related directions • Respond correctly when asked "where?" • Say a few words clearly, and a few dozen additional words so that family members can understand. The words denote important people and common objects, and a few prepositions such as "on," "in," or "under." Many can say "more" and "all gone." • Say successive single words to describe an event • From about 18 months, begin learning about 9 new words a day • Use "my" or "mine" to indicate possession; begin to use "me," "I," and "you"
 <p>2 years to 3 years</p>	<p>Both understanding of language and speaking develop more rapidly at this stage. Most 2-year-olds can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join familiar words into phrases • Begin to use modifiers (adverbs and adjectives) • Point to common objects when they are named • Name objects based on their description • Respond to "what?" and "where?" questions • Enjoy listening to stories and asking for favorite stories • Recount events that happened that day
 <p>3 years to 4 years</p>	<p>Language usage becomes more complex. Most 3-year-olds can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make themselves understood to strangers, despite some sound errors • Use and understand sentences • Use more complex grammar, such as plurals and past tense • Understand sentences involving time concepts (for example, "Grandma is coming tomorrow") and narrate past experiences • Understand size comparisons such as big and bigger • Understand relationships expressed by "if... then" or "because" sentences • Follow a series of two to four related directions • Sing a song and repeat at least one nursery rhyme

Age	Milestones
 	<p>4-year-olds use language not only to converse, but also to exchange information. Most can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retell a story (but may confuse facts) • Combine thoughts into one sentence • Ask "when?" "how?" and "why?" questions • Use words like "can," "will," "shall," "should," and "might" <p>to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine thoughts into one sentence • Refer to causality by using "because" and "so" • Follow three unrelated commands appropriately • Understand comparatives like loud, louder, loudest • Listen to long stories (but may misinterpret the facts) • Understand sequencing of events when clearly explained (for example, "First we plug the drain, then we run the water, and finally we take a bath")

<http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/abc/communication.html>