

Age-Appropriate Hearing, Speech and Language Milestones



An unborn baby's hearing starts to develop early. And at birth, a baby's hearing is fully functioning. The ability to hear is vital for correct speech and language development. Children do respond differently at different stages of growth and development. But hearing problems may be suspected in children who are not responding to sounds. They may also be suspected in children who are not developing their language skills correctly. Below are some age-related guidelines that may help to determine if your child is having hearing problems.

It's important to remember that not every child is the same. Children reach milestones at different ages. Talk with your child's healthcare provider if you think your child is not hearing correctly. Here are the age-appropriate hearing milestones for most babies and toddlers.

Milestones related to speech and hearing

Age	Milestone
Birth to 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reacts to familiar sounds or voices. For example, calms down when hearing parent's voice.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reacts to sudden loud sounds. May blink, startle, or cry.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes vocal sounds other than crying.
3 months to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looks in the direction of a sound to see where it's coming from.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes sounds back when you talk to them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes sounds, such as "oooo" and "ahhh" (cooing).
4 months to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laughs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes turns making sounds with you.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes squealing sounds.
6 months to 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blows "raspberries" (sticks tongue out and blows).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Babbles, making repetitive sounds, such as "mama" and "baba."
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looks when you call their name.
9 months to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smiles or laughs when you play peek-a-boo.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands "no."
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waves "bye-bye."
12 months to 15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calls a parent "mama" or "dada" or another special name.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tries to say 1 or 2 words besides "mama" or "dada," like "ba" for ball or "da" for dog.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows simple directions when given with both a gesture and word. For example, they give you a book when you hold your hand out and say, "Give me the book."
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looks at a familiar object when you name it.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Points to ask for something or get help.

15 months to 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries to say 3 or more words besides “mama” or “dada.” • Follows one-step directions without any gestures, like giving you an object when you say, “Give it to me.” • Combines at least 2 words into short phrases, such as “more cookie” or “want milk.”
18 months to 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points to at least 2 body parts when you ask them to show you. • Uses more gestures than just waving and pointing, like blowing a kiss or nodding yes. • Points to things in a book when you ask, like “Where is the fish?” • Says about 50 words. • Says 2 or more words, with one action word, like “Doggie run.”
24 months to 30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names things in a book when you point and ask, “What is this?” • Says words like “I,” “me,” or “we.” • Follows simple routines when told, like helping to pick up toys when you say, “It’s clean-up time.” • Talks with you in conversation using at least 2 back-and-forth exchanges. • Asks “who,” “what,” “where,” or “why” questions, like “Where is my ball?”
30 months to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says what action is happening in a picture or book when asked, like “swimming,” “eating,” or “walking.” • Says first name, when asked. • Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time. • Says sentences with 4 or more words.
3 years to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says some words from a song, story, or nursery rhyme. • Talks about at least 1 thing that happened during their day. • Answers simple questions like “What is a pencil for?” • Tells a story they heard or made up with at least 2 events. For example, a dog was lost and a friend found it.
4 years to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers simple questions about a book or story after you read or tell it to them. • Keeps a conversation going with more than 3 back-and-forth exchanges. • Uses or recognizes simple rhymes (bat-cat, ball-tall).

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