



## When to be Concerned About a Child's Speech

Children accomplish speech improvement gradually as they get older. Even though all children develop at different rates, research supports guidelines of specific communication skills that most children accomplish by certain ages. Concerned parents should ask their pediatrician for a referral for a speech-language evaluation if:

### Your child under 12 months of age:

- Is quiet and does not babble/coo
- Babbles only contains a few different sounds
- Has difficulty with feeding

### Your child at age 1-2 years:

- Does not have first words
- Has lost previously used words
- Does not add new words every month
- Is not beginning to use two words together in short phrases
- Has few sounds - lack of a consonant by 12 months; lack of 3 consonants by 16 months\*
- At 13-18 months, uses mostly vowels with few other syllable shapes such as consonant-vowel-consonant (mom)\*
- Is frustrated by inability to communicate

### Your child at age 2-3 years:

- Does not have many sounds or words - less than 5 consonants by 24 months\*
- Is limited to no velars (/k/ or /g/ sounds) and uses stops mostly (/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/)\*
- Is not using 2-3 word phrases
- Speech is not understood by familiar adults
- Is frustrated by inability to communicate
- Uses elaborate gesturing instead of speech

### Your child at age 3-4 years:

- Is not using most sounds
- Does not have many words
- Is not using sentences to communicate
- Speech is not understood by unfamiliar listeners most of the time

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\*Overby, M., Caspari, S., & Schreiber, J. (2019). Volubility, Consonant Emergence, and Syllabic Structure in Infants and Toddlers Later Diagnosed with Childhood Apraxia of Speech, Speech Sound Disorder, and Typical Development: A Retrospective Video Analysis. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 62(6), 1657-1675. [https://doi.org/10.1044/2019\\_JSLHR-S-18-0046](https://doi.org/10.1044/2019_JSLHR-S-18-0046)