

Talking and Listening



Talk Box

Your child learns about talking and listening by being with you and other people. They learn the words in your language, how to put words together, how to have conversations, and how to play with others. They also learn how to follow directions and understand questions. Your child learns about talking and listening right from the day they are born. This learning continues until they are an adult.

Check off the things your child is doing.

What to expect

Under 12 months:

- By 3 months old**, responds to sound by startling, blinking, crying, or quieting.
- Comforts to your voice when they are upset and crying.
- Coos, grunts, gurgles, cries, and makes lots of different noises like “ahh.”
- By 6 months old**, shows interest in sounds, voices, and music.
- Looks for the source of a sound and watches your face when you talk.
- Babbles sounds like “mama” and “gaga.”
- Coos and squeals for attention.

Your 1 year old...

- Understands words for everyday objects, like cup, shoe, and car.
- Understands “no” (pauses briefly or stops when you say it).
- Copies gestures, like waving “bye-bye.”
- Responds to their name.
- Babbles using a variety of different sounds, like “bababa dididi upupbupbup.”
- May have first words, like “mama” or “dada.”
- Shows an interest in books.

Your 1½ year old:

- Points to people and body parts when asked.
- Points to pictures in books.
- Understands simple questions and statements, like “Where is your nose?” and “give me.”
- Nods their head for “yes” and shakes their head for “no.”
- Points to make requests, to comment, or to get information.
- Says at least 10 words, although they may not be clear. Understands more words.
- Takes part in imaginary play, like pretending to sleep or feed a doll.



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Your 2 year old:

- Understands simple questions, like “Where is mommy or daddy?” and “Where is your shoe?”
- Understands simple directions, like “Get your blanket.”
- Says 2 words together, like “more milk” and “Mommy eat.”
- Says at least 50 words and understands many more. Words are not always clear, like “du” for shoe.
- Looks at your face to see how to react in a new situation.
- Knows to hold books the right way up and turns pages.

Your 3 year old:

- Answers simple questions, like “What’s your name?” and “Which one is the big doll?”
- Puts a toy or object in, on, and under when asked.
- Says 3 to 4 words together, like “I want more juice” and “Mommy is at work.”
- Talks back and forth with you for at least 2 turns in a conversation.
- Notices other children and plays alongside them.
- Listens when you read books and tell stories for 5 to 15 minutes.

Your 4 year old:

- Pays attention to short stories.
- Understands questions about a picture in a story, like “Where did the bunny go?”
- Uses specific words to name things, like “fireman” instead of “guy” or “sink” instead of “that.”
- Uses sentences that are longer and more complete, like “I want to go out and play on the swing.”
- Uses a lot of sentences that have four or more words.
- Pretends to be something else during play (like a teacher, superhero or dog) with other children.
- Can identify familiar signs and labels, like stop signs.

Your 5 year old:

- Understands words for concepts like colours, shapes, locations, textures (like rough or soft), time (like next or after), and numbers.
- Uses present, future, and past tenses. For example, “She walks to the park. She will walk to the park. She walked to the park.”
- Retells a story by naming the characters and talking about what happened.
- Takes turns in a conversation, interrupts less, and looks at the person who is speaking.
- Can find the front of the book and its title. They pretend to read the story in a way that sounds like they are really reading.



When to get help

Reach out for help if:

- you didn’t check off the skills listed for your child’s age.
- your child is frustrated or hard to understand.



Where to get help

Are you concerned about your child’s speech and language development? Speech-language pathologists can help. For more information go to: [AHS.ca/PedRehab](https://www.ahs.ca/PedRehab)

For information about speech, go to the [Speech Sound Checklist](#).

