



Creative Communication for Kids

Speech & Language Pathology
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Checklist of Warning Signs

Only **one** of the symptoms needs to be observed in order to signal possible difficulties. This list is only a general guideline, and you may have concerns that are not listed here. **If you are concerned at all about your child's communication skills, talk to a Speech-Language therapist right away.** Early intervention is important and can help save you and your child years of frustration. We are here to answer your questions.

at 9 Months

- does not turn to you when you speak or call his name
- does not appear to understand or enjoy the social rewards of interaction
- lack of connection with adult (lack of eye contact, reciprocal eye gaze, vocal turn-taking)
- does not enjoy games like "peek-a-boo" and tickling
- no babbling, or babbling with few or no consonants
- rarely makes sounds
- limited back-and-forth sharing of sounds

at 12 Months

- does not clearly indicate request for object while focusing on object
- does not coordinate action between objects and adults
- lack of consistent patterns of reduplicative babbling
- lack of responses indicating comprehension of words or communicative gestures
- exclusive reliance on context or gestures for language understanding
- does not follow simple instructions ("sit down", "come here")
- does not respond to a firm "No!"
- does not try to imitate sounds
- does not wave or imitate gestures
- does not play peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake, etc.

at 18 Months

- does not point to objects to request them
- says less than 10 words
- very quiet - rarely attempts words
- does not try to ask for what he/she wants using either sound or words
- does not persist in communication; gives up easily
- does not understand names
- understands less than 50 words or phrases without gesture or context clues
- does not follow basic directions (Show me the ____ or give me the ____.)

at 24 Months

- not using words to communicate
- says less than 40 words
- does not put 2 words together
- easily frustrated by communication
- is not understood by parents at least 50% of the time
- does not name common objects and familiar people
- does not ask simple questions ("where kitty?", "go bye-bye?", "more?")
- compulsive labeling of objects in place of commenting or requesting
- regression in language development, stops talking, or begins echoing phrases
- does not answer yes/no questions
- does not point to pictures of familiar people and things when asked ("Show me your nose.", "Where's the ball?")
- does not identify 3 body parts
- does not follow directions

at 36 Months

- leaves beginning sounds off words
- still imitates speech a lot
- uses only a few phrases
- does not use 3-4 word sentences
- does not demand a response from listeners
- does not ask questions
- frequent tantrums when not understood
- echoing or "parroting" of speech without communicative intent
- does not follow two-step instructions ("Take off your shoes and put them in the closet.")
- is not understood by parents at least 80% of the time; is not understood by people outside the family at least 50% of the time
- does not understand simple stories
- does not talk about past/future events
- does not answer *who*, *what*, *where* questions
- difficulty singing songs
- tends to play alone
- does not sit for books or listening
- still using "baby talk"

at 48 Months

- leaves end sounds off words
- does not use 4-5 word sentences
- does not carry on a conversation
- relies on "memorized" sentences
- does not ask frequent questions
- does not tell stories – real or make believe
- does not follow 3-step instructions ("Get your boots, put them on and wait outside for me.")
- does not remember details from a story that you have told or read
- does not predict what might happen next in an unfamiliar story
- repeats a question before answering
- inappropriate or off-target answers
- does not play make believe or group games like hide-and-seek with other children
- is not understood by people outside the family more than 75% of the time

at 5 Years

does not follow complex instructions (ex. "When grandpa arrives, tell him I'm outside and help him take his bag upstairs")
does not point to colors when asked
does not answer "how old are you?"
cannot answer *when, why* questions
does not answer questions "what would you do if...?" and "why"
does not use complete sentences ("Mommy, can I have a cookie?", "I scraped my knee when I fell off the bike")
is not understood by people outside the family almost all the time
does not share and take turns
does not have 1 good friend
stuttering
tongue thrust when eating or speaking

School-age

articulation sounds immature compared to classmates
articulation interferes with friendships or people's ability to understand the child
avoids, stumbles, or gets stuck on certain words and sounds
has difficulty communicating with friends
struggles with reading and writing despite good oral language skills
has frequent or long-term hoarseness
is unable to control the volume of his/her speech appropriately
uses unusual word order
cannot tell stories in a logical, organized manner
difficulty with in-depth conversations
difficulty understanding and following directions in the classroom or at home
difficulty listening or paying attention
difficulty making or keeping friends

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

How well should parents be able to understand their own child's speech?

- By 18 months, a child's speech is understood by parents 25% of the time.
- By 24 months, a child's speech is understood by parents 50-75% of the time.
- By 36 months, a child's speech is understood by parents 75-100% of the time.

Source: Lynch, Brookshire, & Fox (1980)

Absolutely refer no later than the age indicated for difficulty with these sounds:

<u>3 years</u>	<u>4 years</u>	<u>7 years</u>	<u>8 years</u>
m	k	r	v
h	g	l	z
n	d	s	th
w	f	ch	
b	v	sh	
p	t	j	

Lisps: ALWAYS refer for an "s" or "z" that sounds wet, spittly, or hissy.

Stuttering: ALWAYS refer if the child has been stuttering for over 6 months, or if the child has facial grimacing or tics along with the stuttering, or if the child is over the age of 5 years.

