

Speech and Language Development During Preschool Years

Age	Milestones* <small>*These milestones are based on the English language. Some early sounds and utterance length may be different in other languages.</small>	Examples
18 months	Uses 18 different words (in any language) Says and gestures “no” Points to objects to communicate wants	Mama/ papa/ milk/ more/ ball
24 months/ 2 years	Uses 50 different words (in any language) + 3 action words	Go/ eat/ drink/ play/ throw/ walk
	Two-word phrases	Go store./ Mama shoes.
	Is understood by a stranger 50% of the time	
	Point to objects when named	Point to the bus ./ Show me the cup .
36 months/ 3 years	Three-word phrases	Big dog go./ Papa play ball.
	Asks for items by name	I want cracker .
	Is understood by a stranger 50-75% of the time	
	Follows two-part instructions	Get your shoes and bring them to me./ Pick up your toy and put it in the box.
	Uses sounds “p, b, m, n, h, w”	
48 months/ 4 years	Express feelings	I’m happy./ That made me mad.
	Use four- to five-word phrases	I want the big truck./ Can I have water?
	Follow two- and three-part instructions	Point to the cat, the dog, and the mouse./ Pick up the book and put it on the table.
	Uses sounds “k, g, d, t, f, y”	
60 months/ 5 years	Able to tell a personal story about what happened at school, friend’s house, etc.	
	Uses four- to eight- word sentences	I want the green ball.
	May begin to use sounds “r, l, s, th”	



Parallel Talk:

- Talk about what you or your child are doing whenever you are together.

Examples:

- “I’m cooking dinner. I’m stirring the pot. This is my spoon. You have a spoon, too!”
- “Let’s take a bath. The water is warm. You’re all wet! We need some soap. Rub rub rub!”

Playing together:

- Imaginary play encourages the use of language, listening, and turn taking.
 - Play pretend by using everyday items as something else during play.

Example: *Using a spoon as a telephone to call a sibling, a flashlight to search a bear cave in the bedroom, or as a paddle in a rowboat.*



Children playing in boxes. Digital image. [sitters.co.uk](https://www.sitters.co.uk).
<https://www.sitters.co.uk/blog/the-15-best-activities-for-children-to-help-them-learn-through-play.aspx>

Resources:

- Websites:
 - First 5 San Diego: <http://first5sandiego.org/>
 - The Hanen Centre: <http://www.hanen.org>
 - National Association for the Education of Young Children: <http://families.naeyc.org/>
 - San Diego County Library Kid’s Corner: <http://www.sdcl.org/kids/visit.html>
 - PBS Kids: <http://pbskids.org/>
- Apps:
 - Toca Boca
 - LumiKids
 - ABC Ninjas
 - Daily Vroom