



# COMMUNICATION MILESTONES

## FOR CHILDREN FROM BIRTH TO 5 YEARS

**Each child develops uniquely, even within the same family, and may meet certain milestones earlier or later than others.**

From **Birth to 6 months**, many children...

- Startle in response to sudden, loud noises
- Make sounds back and forth with you
- Look at objects of interest & follow objects with their eyes
- Turn or look toward voices or people talking
- Watch your face as you talk
- Vocalize during play or with objects in their mouth
- Vocalize different vowel sounds - sometimes combined with a consonant - like uuuuummm, aaaaaagoo, or daaaaaa

From **7 to 12 months**, many children...

- Look at you when you call their name
- Stop for a moment when you say "No"
- By age 9 months babble like mamamama or babababa
- Use sounds or gestures to let you know what they want e.g. raises arms to be picked up
- Point, wave, and show or give objects
- Imitate and initiate gestures for engaging in social interactions and playing games, like blowing kisses or playing peek-a-boo
- Understand simple words and phrases such as "Sit down," "Go bye-bye"
- Say one or two words - like "Mama", "Dada", "Hi", and "Bye"

From **13 to 18 months**, many children...

- Look around when asked "where" questions - like "Where's your blanket?"
- Follow directions - like, "Give me the ball, "Hug the teddy bear, "Come here" or "Show me your nose"
- Point to make requests, to comment, or to get information
- Identify one or more body parts
- Use a combination of long strings of sounds, syllables, and real words with speech-like inflection
- Understand and use words for common objects, some actions, and people in their lives

From **19 to 24 months**, many children...

- Use and understand at least 50 different words for food, toys, animals, and body parts
- Speech may not always be clear
- Put two or more words together - like "More water" or "Go outside"
- Follow two-step directions - like "Get the spoon and put it on the table"
- Use words like me, mine, and you
- Use words to ask for help
- Use possessives, like "Daddy's sock"

From **2 to 3 years**, many children...

- Use word combinations often like "Baby sit" or "I want juice"
- Get your attention using words
- Say their name when asked
- Use some plural words like "birds" or "toys"
- Use some -ing verbs like "eating" or "running"
- Add -ed to the end of words to talk about past actions like "looked" or "played"
- Ask why and how
- Answer questions like "What do you do when you are sleepy?" or "Which one can you wear?"
- Correctly produce p, b, m, h, w, d, and n in words
- Correctly produce most vowels in words
- Speech is becoming clearer; however, it may not be understood by unfamiliar listeners or people who do not know your child

From **3 to 4 Years**, many children...

- Learn to use longer sentences
- Pretend to read and/or tell a simple story from a book or a video
- Understand and use location words like inside, on, and under
- Use words like a or the when talking like “I want the dog”
- Recognize signs and logos, like a stop sign
- Correctly produce t, k, g, f, y, and –ing in words
- Say all the syllables in a word like elephant
- Produce the sounds at the beginning, middle, and end of words
- By age 4, may talk smoothly and not repeat sounds, words, or phrases most of the time
- By age 4, may speak so that people can understand most of what they said
- By age 4, may make some mistakes on sounds that are later to develop like l, j, r, sh, ch, s, v, z, and th
- By age 4, tries to use all sounds in consonant clusters, “spray” might sound like “spway”
- Talk about past events like a trip to grandparents’ house with photos

From **4 to 5 Years**, many children...

- Produce grammatically correct sentences that are longer and more complex
- Tell simple stories with main characters, settings, and words like and to connect ideas
- Understand and use location words, like behind, beside, and between
- May use more words for time like yesterday and tomorrow
- Follow simple directions and rules to play games
- Locate the front of a book and the title
- Recognize and name some letters and may begin to print their own name
- Imitate reading and writing from left to right
- Blend word parts, like cup + cake = cupcake and identify some rhyming words, like cat and hat
- Produce most consonants correctly, and speech is understandable in conversation

Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC) supports the implementation and promotion of the Developmental Milestones for communication (hearing, speech, and language) and feeding and swallowing from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2023).

The communication milestones are for monolingual American English-speaking children.

A Speech and Language Pathologist’s role includes assessment, treatment and consultation services for language difficulties and disorders, speech sound disorders, language disorders associated with Autism or other developmental differences, as well as emergent literacy, feeding/swallowing, stuttering, and voice disorders.

The skills children learn now are the building blocks for future growth and development.  
Early identification and intervention are the key to success.

tykeTALK and Grey Bruce Preschool Speech and Language are publicly funded services by the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, therefore services are delivered at no charge to families.

TVCC coordinates tykeTALK services in Elgin, Oxford, and Middlesex counties.  
Locations include TVCC London, St. Thomas and Strathroy, Western University, and Woodstock Hospital.

TVCC coordinates Preschool Speech and Language services in Grey and Bruce counties.  
Locations include TVCC Owen Sound and community locations in Markdale, Meaford, Hanover, Kincardine, Port Elgin, Southampton, Walkerton, and Wiarton.

**If you are concerned with your child’s development, make a self-referral:**

Website:

<https://www.tvcc.on.ca/intake-referrals>



Call:

TVCC Intake and Referrals  
519-685-8716 (in London calling area)  
1-866-590-8822 ext 58716 (toll free)

Print and mail forms to:

TVCC  
Attention: INTAKE  
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