



Milestones checklist

Speech and language skills develop over time. Every child will develop at their own rate.

The checklist below also applies to children and families who speak more than one language at home (bilingual or multilingual children).

When a child does not develop one of the skills at the expected age, it does not always mean that there is a problem. When a child does not develop one of the skills at the expected age, it does not always mean that there is a problem. If you have questions or concerns about the child's skills, you can contact us. You do not need a doctor to refer.

3 to 4 years

Does the child:

- Speak clearly so people understand them most of the time
- Ask and answer many questions
- Talk in sentences (maybe with a few grammar errors)
- Have enough words for most of the things in their life
- Use pronouns like 'I', 'you', 'me', 'they'
- Tell a short story about their day
- Express ideas and feelings
- Make-believe in play (pretend to be a chef)
- Have fun with language – enjoy rhymes and simple jokes
- Understand that words belong in categories like 'foods' or 'clothing'
- Describe the use of an object like 'a cup is for drinking'
- Tell favourite parts of a story
- Pretend to read a book (look at the pictures, tell a story but not read what's actually on the page)
- Recognize some letters of the alphabet

Call us if you feel concerned or if:

- The child is not doing most of the things in the above checklist.
- The child leaves off consonants at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of words (cat = at, puppy = puh-ee, goat = go)
- People who don't know the child well have difficulty understanding what the child says.
- The child isn't using full sentences.
- The child doesn't interact or play with others.
- The child doesn't seem to understand directions.
- The child doesn't have a short back-and-forth conversation with you.

What you can do to help

- Talk about how objects go together (like a plate and a cup).
- Read, sing, and talk about where you go and what you do.
- Read story books every day. Tell them about your favourite part and ask them what theirs was.
- Read books and ask 'what do you think will happen next?'
- Look for words that begin with the same sound.
- Point out numbers and letters.
- Look at pictures or photos and ask the child to tell a story about them.
- Act out daily activities like going to the doctor or cooking a meal.
- Show the child you're interested in what they're trying to tell you and talk to the child throughout the day.