



# 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.

## 4 to 5 years

Does the child:

- Participate in conversation even when there is background noise
- Hear and understand most of what is said at home or at school
- Pronounce most speech sounds correctly
- Follow longer directions like 'wash your hands, get a cup, and come sit at the table'
- Understand words for order like 'first', 'next', 'last'
- Ask and answer questions about a story
- Use rhyming words
- Name letters and numbers
- Understand space concepts like 'behind' or 'on top'
- List items that belong in a category (like 'animals')
- Answer 'why' questions
- Describe the steps involved in an activity (like brushing teeth)
- Use sentences that give lots of details
- Communicate easily with other children and adults
- Use their imagination when playing with other children

Call us if you feel concerned or if:

- The child is not doing most of the things in the above checklist.
- 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 understand directions with three or more steps.
- The child doesn't have a back-and-forth conversation with you.

## What you can do to help

- Connect stories from books to the child's life.
- Draw and write together.
- Identify letters in the child's name.
- Talk about where things are in space using words like 'on top of' or 'to the left of'.
- Let the child explain how to do something.
- Keep teaching new words. For example 'Let's put the clothes away. Here are some shirts. Shirts are types of *clothing*. Pants, and sock, and sweaters are also *clothing*'.
- Teach your child to ask for help.
- Act out stories using your imagination.
- Read story books every day. Tell them about your favourite part and ask them what theirs was.
- Play games like 'I Spy'.
- Play board games.
- Ask the child to help you plan an event or the activities for the day.
- Show the child you're interested in what they're trying to tell you and talk to the child throughout the day.