

## **General Communication Development into School Age**

Infants use intentional communication through gesture and/or vocalizations. They accompany these modes with eye contact. (James, 1990)

### **Birth – 1 month**

- Sounds consist of reflexive crying and vegetative sounds (clicks and burps)
- Vowel-like sounds
- Able to discriminate between mother's and another's voice along with between foreign language and native language of mother

### **1 – 6 months**

- Cooing, gooing, laughing, squealing and growling. Cooing equals vocalic sounds sometimes including back consonants /k/ and/g/ and some consonant-vowel productions (ex. *ka* and *guh*)

### **4 months**

- Able to match facial shapes with vocalizations (rounded lips for "o" sound)
- Prefer infant directed speech (exaggerated intonational patterns, rhythmic, slower speech, and higher pitch)

### **4– 6 months**

- Babbling appears (CV and VC productions, ex. *ba ba ba* or *ug ug ug*)

### **6– 8 months**

- Reduplicated babbling (*baba*) – repeat same syllable
- Vocal play and increase variety of sounds
- Can distinguish between words produced in native language vs. foreign language

### **8– 10 months**

- Variegated babbling (strings of alternating sounds – ex. *ba-de-ga-poo*)
- Adult intonational patterns emerge
- Echolalia appears - repeat what others say

### **9– 12 months**

- Jargon, likely unintelligible, appears (strings of syllables that mirror adult speech)
- Consistent use of sounds relating to a specific context (ex. *uh* – always means up while *ah* always means more)
- Gaze alteration – child can look back and forth between two objects (ex. mother and cookie)
- Repair of a failed message – if initial signal fails to result in adult action, child repeats and may expand the message
- Ritualize previous instrumental gestures – reaching out for object may now only become a grasping motion and vocalization for the desired object

### **12 months**

- Emergence of first words consisting of labels for entities, actions, properties and personal-social words (*bye-bye*)
- Expressive vocabulary of 1 or more words (receptive vocabulary generally exceeds expressive vocabulary)

### **15 months**

- Expressive vocabulary of 4 – 6 words
- Produce first words with recognizable meaning to regulate the behavior of others, to gain joint attention and for social interaction

### **18 months**

- Expressive vocabulary of 20 words
- May initiate 2-word combinations (ex. *more juice*)

### **24 months**

- Expressive vocabulary of 200 – 300 words

### **27– 30 months**

- grammatical morphemes emerge, but not mastered until about 41 – 46 months
- early pronouns (I, me, mine, my)

### **1 – 2 years**

Children use language to:

- gain attention, request information, and call others
- name, describe, and give information beyond the immediate situation
- describe activities, describe intent to carry out an activity, refuse and protest
- imitate, answer, respond, and question

### **2 1/2 – 3 years**

- Can introduce new topics in conversation, but difficulty sustaining topic beyond 1 – 2 turns
- Can acknowledge conversational partner, but don't often wait their turn or build a bridge in conversation
- Use dialogue to talk about events that happened to them

### **3 years**

- Expressive vocabulary of 900 – 1000 words
- Begin to gain better perspective on conversational needs
- Begin to adapt their language to needs of partner
- Cannot yet clarify a misunderstood message (usually just repeat it louder!)

### **3 1/2 years**

- Relate stories about recent events

### **3 – 5 years**

- begin to use comparatives (ex. *bigger*) and superlatives (ex. *biggest*), *better* and *best* develop later

### **4 years**

- Expressive vocabulary of 1500 words
- adult-like syntax including expanded noun and verb phrases, negative sentences, yes/no questions, *wh*- questions (*what, where, who, why, when*), causal constructions (*because*), conditional constructions (*If ... then*), temporal constructions (*when ...*)

- can describe event sequences

### **5 years**

- Expressive vocabulary of over 2000 words
- Word definitions are concrete consisting primarily of referent's appearance and function (ex. *scissors are silver and for cutting*)
- Get what they want by asking directly!

### **6 years**

- Expressive vocabulary of 2600 words
- Receptive vocabulary of 20,000 – 24,000 words

### **7 years**

- Identify and explain metaphors (ex. *He has a heart of stone.*) – related to cognitive development
- Begin to understand the psychological meanings of words, such as *sweet*, *cold*, and *bright*
- Phonological ambiguity is understood somewhat – beginning to understand jokes of this sort (Ex. "Why did the clock go to the doctor? Because he was tick.")
- Use more indirect means to gain needs

### **Middle Childhood**

- Begin to use nonliteral language such as jokes, riddles, and metaphors
- Learning about idioms (ex. *It's raining cats and dogs.*)

### **School-age**

- Word definitions become more abstract including synonyms, explanations, and categories
- Define words with more socially shared meanings
- Definitions include concrete, literal and non-literal meanings (when appropriate)
- Semantic relations include concepts of time, space, causation, and sequencing of action
- Correct interpretation of *if* and *although* may not occur until age 11 years. *Unless* may not be understood completely until age 15
- Pragmatically – can gain and hold adults' attention in socially acceptable manner; direct and follow peers; use others as resources; express affection, hostility, and anger when appropriate; express pride in themselves and accomplishments; role play; compete with peers in storytelling

**Form adapted by Kate Ross, MS, CCC-SLP from: Bernstein, Deena K. and Ellenmorris Tiegerman-Farber. *Language and Communication Disorders in Children, Fifth Edition*. Allyn and Bacon Publishers; Boston: 2002.**