

Checklist of Communication Skills at 9 months

Milestones to check	Helpful Hints	What to look out for in the child or yourself	When to talk to a speech and language therapist
<p>Play Explores everything and begins to play with things appropriately e.g. bangs a drum, cuddles a teddy</p>	<p>Play with a wide variety of toys and household items</p>		
<p>Uses everyday objects appropriately when playing e.g. brushes his or his Mother's hair</p>	<p>Give the child everyday objects to copy you in everyday situations e.g. give the child a spoon as you feed him</p>	<p>Puts everything in the mouth and does not do different things with different objects</p>	
<p>Follows when you point to an object</p>	<p>Talk about and point to objects the child is interested in</p>	<p>Does not look towards things you point to</p>	
<p>Takes turns e.g. will take turns to build a tower or post shapes, play peek-a-boo</p>	<p>Play a variety of turn taking games</p>	<p>Little eye contact Little turn taking</p>	
<p>Understanding what people say Will listen to someone talking intently without being distracted by other noises</p>	<p>Play listening games e.g. 'Peek-a-boo'</p>	<p>Shows little interest in listening to people or looking at their faces</p>	
<p>Copies clapping and waving bye-bye type movements</p>	<p>Help the child to copy your hand movements by holding his hands to wave at someone or holding his hands to clap</p>	<p>Does not respond to Mother's hand movements</p>	
<p>Gives you an object in real situations when you point e.g. Can give you a spoon at mealtimes when you say 'Give me the spoon' and point to it</p>	<p>Name objects the child picks up or looks at so that he learns the words for things. Use simple 1 or 2 word sentences</p>	<p>Make sure that the adult's speech is simple so that the child can begin to learn words for objects and actions</p>	
<p>Responds to your tone of voice e.g. recognises 'no!'</p>	<p>Make your voice sound interesting and slightly exaggerate the tone of your voice and facial expression as you show pleasure or annoyance</p>	<p>Does not respond to changes in the tone of your voice</p>	
<p>Talking Babbles a lot and uses the same sounds over and over again e.g. 'dada dada'</p>	<p>Copy any sounds your child makes, including babbling sounds, and pause so that he can make them again. This encourages turn taking too</p>	<p>Does not babble</p>	
<p>Will shout to attract your attention and begins to point to things he would like</p>	<p>Watch the child and respond to his attempts to 'talk' to you by giving him things he looks at, points to or moves towards.</p>	<p>Does not try to communicate by using noises or body movements to ask for things, to encourage you to join in or show dislike</p>	

Checklist of Communication Skills at 1½ Years

Milestones to check	Helpful Hints	What to look out for in the child or yourself	When to talk to a speech and language therapist
Play Acts out simple routines e.g. puts teddy to bed	Play with the child and help show him how to act out everyday routines with teddy or dolls. This type of play is important for boys too!	Forgetting to let the child lead the play	
Begins to play with miniature toys	Introduce small people like Playmobile but make sure that, to start with, the toys look like real things. Show the child what to do.	Does not show any interest in teddies, dolls or pretend people	
Begins to sort objects e.g. puts all the cars or animals together or finds all the things for Mummy or for baby	Encourage the child to help tidy up and sort things into boxes		
Understanding what people say Can give you objects you ask for at any time and in any situation without you pointing to it	Talk to the child using short simple sentences. Talk about what you and the child can see and what you are doing	Forgetting to talk about everyday things	The child cannot give one object you ask for when there are 4 or 5 things in front of him to choose from
Can point to parts of the body when asked e.g. 'Where are your toes?'	Name objects and actions so the child learns the words for these things		AND
Can do a simple action when asked to e.g. 'Jump up and down' or 'touch your toes'	Call the child by their name before asking them to do simple things for you		He is not using any single words
Talking Has a vocabulary of 20 words	Talk to the child using short simple sentences. Talk about what you and the child can see and what you are doing	Forgetting to name everyday things and what things or people are doing	AND
May begin to put words together e.g. 'more biscuit'	Use simple two word phrases every time you do everyday things e.g. 'more juice?' 'bye-bye Daddy'	Forgetting to use simple 1 or 2 word sentences in everyday situations to give good examples of how to start using sentences	He only uses a few babble sounds
Often repeats or echoes the last thing you say	Don't worry about this as it is a normal phase		OR
May use babble between real words but it sounds as though he is talking in sentences	Repeat any words or sentences the child uses so that he hears good examples and learns how to put words together	Don't correct the child's speech. Just repeat what he says so that he hears good examples	You are worried about your child's speech and language

Checklist of Communication Skills at 2½ Years

Milestones to check	Helpful Hints	What to look out for in the child or yourself	When to talk to a speech and language therapist
<p>Play</p> <p>Will join play sequences together e.g. undresses doll, prepares bath, washes and dresses doll</p> <p>Can use objects imaginatively e.g. pretends that a box is a car or a bed</p>	<p>Involve the child in everyday situations and then act these out in play</p> <p>Let the child explore ways of using 'junk'. Perhaps use these in your play to show the child how to use objects imaginatively</p>	<p>Does not show any interest in teddies, dolls, pretend people or miniature toys</p>	
<p>Understanding what people say</p> <p>Can understand an instruction which has two important words e.g. 'give some juice to Tom'</p> <p>Understands verbs or action words e.g. 'Walk'</p>	<p>Talk about everyday things you do but keep the language simple</p> <p>Start to use words which describe things e.g. colour, number, size</p>	<p>Not listening and finds it difficult to concentrate especially when listening, for example, to a story</p> <p>Not able to give you things you ask for</p>	<p>Not understanding simple requests e.g. 'Give the brush to Mummy'</p>
<p>Enjoys listening to a short story</p>	<p>Read stories and repeat stories your child enjoys. Also talk about the pictures and encourage the child to tell the story</p>		
<p>Talking</p> <p>Can use short 2 or 3 word sentences</p>	<p>Repeat what the child says and add 1 or 2 extra words. Talk about a wide variety of things as you do them. Use books to talk about things you are not doing at the time</p>	<p>Not joining words together or not showing an interest in trying to talk to people</p>	<p>Has a vocabulary of less than 50 single words</p>
<p>The sentences may not be complete e.g. misses out some words or uses immature words e.g. 'Sammy walking' for 'Sammy is walking' or 'me talled over' for 'I fell over'</p> <p>Speech sounds</p> <p>The child's speech will sound immature and he will not be able to use all the speech sounds. He will probably use:</p> <p>m n p b t d w l y h</p>	<p>Repeat what the child says but say it correctly so that he hears good examples</p> <p>Repeat any words a child mispronounces so that he hears good examples. Don't ask him to say the words again.</p> <p>Play games and look at books but sometimes use just single words so the child can hear them clearly</p>	<p>Forgetting to talk about everyday things</p>	
		<p>Rarely able to understand what the child is trying to say</p>	<p>If the child's speech is very difficult to understand consider getting his hearing checked.</p>

Checklist of Communication Skills at 3½ Years

Milestones to check	Helpful Hints	What to look out for in the child or yourself	When to talk to a speech and language therapist
<p>Play</p> <p>Enjoys imaginative and pretend play</p>	<p>At this age children really enjoy dressing up. Encourage a wide range of play, dressing up and using miniature toys</p>	<p>Has difficulties deciding what to play with and how to play with toys</p>	
<p>Likes to play with other children</p>	<p>Provide opportunities to play with 1 or 2 friends</p>	<p>Dislikes playing with friends or doesn't seem to know how to</p>	<p>Does not talk or play with friends</p>
<p>Can concentrate on an activity he has chosen for 15 minutes</p>	<p>If your child is having difficulties concentrating consider 5 minutes 'Special Time'. Remember all the aspects of adult-child interaction</p>	<p>Can't concentrate on anything for more than 5 minutes</p>	
<p>Understanding what people say</p> <p>Can understand a simple conversation about something you are doing as you do it</p>	<p>Talk about everyday things which interest the child. Keep talking about stories as these give opportunities for different conversations</p>	<p>Doesn't listen and cannot respond to your simple questions during a conversation</p>	
<p>Understands sentences with three important words e.g. 'Get the big spoon out of the drawer'</p>	<p>Talk about things the child cannot see at the moment but remember to keep the language simple</p>		<p>Not understanding simple directions and 'Who? What? Where?' type questions</p>
<p>Understands some describing words e.g. 'long, short, blue, red, hard, soft, fast, slow'</p>	<p>Use a wide variety of describing words. Use books such as 'opposite books'</p>	<p>Does not understand simple describing words like 'big' or 'little'</p>	
<p>Talking</p> <p>Can use 3 or 4 word sentences</p>	<p>Repeat what the child says and add 1 or 2 extra words. Talk about a wide variety of things as you do them.</p>	<p>Only using sentences with 3 or 4 words together or not showing an interest in trying to talk to people</p>	<p>Not joining 3 words together to make sentences</p>
<p>Uses small grammatical words and endings e.g. 'my brother is kicking the balls'</p>	<p>If your child makes mistakes, repeat what he says but say it correctly so that he hears good examples</p>	<p>Making children repeat things correctly</p>	<p>If your child stammers a referral is important to discuss what you should and should not do</p>
<p>Speech sounds</p> <p>Your child may not use all the speech sounds but he should be understood by most people</p> <p>m n p b t d k g f s sh w l y h</p>	<p>Repeat any words a child mispronounces so that he hears good examples. Don't ask him to say the words again. Play games and look at books but sometimes use just single words so the child can hear them clearly Remember nursery rhymes and rhyming books</p>	<p>Making children copy the way you say words</p>	<p>If the child's speech is very difficult to understand</p>

Checklist of Communication Skills at 4½ Years

Milestones to check	Helpful Hints	What to look out for in the child or yourself	When to talk to a speech and language therapist
Play Play often involves pretending to be another person and acting out how that person would behave and talk	Encourage a wide range of play, dressing up and using miniature toys. Encourage your child to act out situations or stories	Plays mostly with construction toys. Avoids playing with toys which need imagination	
Likes to be involved with organising games and co-operating with other children	Provide opportunities to play with small groups of friends	Dislikes playing with friends or doesn't seem to know how to	Does not talk or play with friends
Understanding what people say Can understand instructions given to a group of children	This is difficult to achieve at home but encouraging good listening is really important as the child begins to cope with busy classrooms	Doesn't listen and rarely responds to your simple questions during a conversation	Cannot understand simple conversations
Understands 'Why?' and 'How?' type questions	Ask children 'Why?' Type questions about things they are doing or looking at rather than events or ideas they cannot see	Understands 'Who?' 'What?' and 'Where?' questions but not 'Why?' and 'How?'	Not understanding directions and 'Who? What? Where?' type questions. Does not understand simple describing words such as 'long, short, full, empty'
Appreciates past and future time so that they understand when they have to wait a couple of days/a week before something happens	Talk about things which have happened during the day and things which will happen tomorrow. Children often don't talk about what they do at pre-school, this is normal!	Can only talk about things which are here and now	
Begins to enjoy simple jokes	Look at humorous books together. Start by talking about the funny pictures so the child can see what is funny		
Talking Can hold a simple conversation	Make time to listen to your child talking about things which interest him and try to encourage him to have a short conversation about it	Might talk about something he is interested in but cannot take turns in a conversation or listen to anyone else who tries to talk	Not joining 4 or 5 words together to make sentences
Most sentences are grammatically correct	If your child makes mistakes, repeat what he says but say it correctly so that he hears good examples	Sentences are still incorrect	Not using small words and word endings e.g. 'Sammy walking' or 'me talled over'. Words are in the wrong order
Begins to join sentences together by using words like 'and' and 'because'	Repeat any words a child mispronounces so that he hears good examples. Help the child say difficult words Play games with rhyme and sounds at the beginnings of words	Any dysfluent speech which carries on for more than a couple of days	If your child stammers a referral is important to discuss how to help your child
Speech sounds Most sounds at the beginning and ends of words are correct except 'th' and 'r'. Will be starting to use blends like 'sp, st, sk, bl, kr'		Making children copy the way you say words	If the child's speech is difficult to understand. Problems with 'K, g, s, f or sh sounds

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Girls and boys may experience communication difficulties. For clarity, 'he' has been used but information applies to both sexes. This sheet can be photocopied for educational or clinical use by the purchaser or purchasing institution only.