



Setting Language in Motion: Family Supports and Early Intervention for Babies Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Communication Language Milestones

The skills and milestones identified here are those that appear most often in research about early language development in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This chart is not meant to be exhaustive but instead to highlight some of the critical milestones of language development. If there are any concerns about a baby's language development, his or her early intervention provider or pediatrician should be contacted.

Receptive Skills

Birth-6 months:

- Quiets and/or smiles when interactions occur
- Appears to recognize caregivers (and quiets if crying)
- Moves head in the direction of people
- Notices toys that are visually attractive
- Appears to attend to signed or spoken language
- Follows eye gaze
- Enjoys being held and/or cuddled
- Laughs when sees fingers approach to tickle
- Begins to respond to attention-getting behavior (e.g., waving, changes in vocalization, turning the lights on and off)

6-12 months:

- Enjoys games like Peek-a-Boo and Pat-a-Cake
- Responds to changes in facial expression
- Begins to recognize signs or speech for common items (e.g., more, cup, shoe, juice)
- Begins to respond to gestured or vocalized requests (e.g., "Come here.")
- Appears interested in the same items or objects as his or her parent(s)

MODULE FOUR

Launching Communication and Language Through Sign

1-2 years:

- Points to a few body parts when asked
- Follows simple commands and understands simple questions (e.g. "Roll the ball."; "Where's your shoe?")
- Attends to simple short stories
- Points to something when asked (e.g., "Where's the dog?")
- Recognizes own name
- Recognizes names of family members

2-3 years:

- Understands differences in meaning (e.g., go-stop, big-little, up-down)
- Follows two requests ("Get the book and put it on the table.")
- Receptive vocabulary range (signed or spoken) >150
- Understands how and when to take turns in a conversation
- Responds to questions (e.g., "Who?"; "What?")
- Has some understanding of when things occurred (e.g., today, yesterday)
- Can identify and match colors when asked
- Enjoys stories and imitates the actions, facial expressions, movement, and other characteristics of characters from a story

Expressive Skills

Birth-6 months:

- Smiles at a familiar person
- Makes pleasure sounds (e.g., cooing) and/or plays with hands
- Cries differently for different needs

- Shows excitement or displeasure through vocalizations, body movement, and/or facial expressions
- Looks attentively towards a person's face
- Smiles in the direction of people and shifts body or head to follow them

6-12 months:

- Babbling emerges via vocalization and hand gestures
- Uses hands to gesture or grasp and vocalizations to get and keep the attention of others
- Imitates handshapes or sounds
- Attempts to produce one- to two-word phrases although may not always be clear or accurate
- Waves goodbye at appropriate times
- Begins to mimic body language or the behavior of others
- Enjoys games like Peek-a-Boo and Pat-a-Cake
- Fixates on the face of the person talking to him or her
- Begins to produce single word utterances (e.g., more, milk)

1-2 years:

- Great monthly growth in expressive language
- Produces questions using one to two words (e.g., "Where's blanket?"; "What's that?")
- Strings words together (e.g., "More cookie."; "No juice."; "Mommy book.")
- Attempts to produce responses to questions even if he or she doesn't have the words
- Responds to questions by pointing to objects in the environment
- Answers simple questions (e.g., "Where?"; "What?")
- Spontaneously communicates wants and needs (e.g., sleepy, hungry, thirsty)

2-3 years:

- Attempts to label almost everything
- Spontaneously asks for or directs attention to objects by naming them
- Expressive vocabulary ranges between 250-350 words
- Begins to describe items using adjectives (e.g., big, small, shiny)
- Requests help when needed
- Uses pronouns (e.g., he, she, it)
- Counts from 1-5 independently
- Names colors
- Begins to tell simple stories about present situations

Milestones were compiled using these resources:

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart/
- Andrews, J. F., Logan, R., & Phelan, J. G. (2008). Milestones for language development of speech, hearing and ASL. *ADVANCE Healthcare Network for Speech & Hearing, 18(2)*, 16.
- Apel, K., & Masterson, J. (2012). *Beyond baby talk: From speaking to spelling: A guide to language and literacy development for parents and caregivers*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Meier, R. P., & Newport, E. L. (1990). Out of the hands of babes: On a possible sign advantage in language acquisition. *Language, 66*, 1-23.
- Simms, L., Baker, S. M., & Clark, D. (2013). The standardized visual communication and sign language checklist for signing children. *Sign Language Studies, 14(1)*, 101-124.

Please refer to the Module 4 video for more tips and information. Also, visit our websites at www.bostonchildrenshospital.org/dhnp and <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>.