

Warning Signs



Warning Signs for Speech and/or Language Delay

You Know Your Child



Children develop at different rates, but most follow a general guideline of developmental norms. As a parent, you know your child best and these guidelines may not apply to your child. It is normal to compare your child to other children. It is also normal to worry if you think your child is not keeping up. If you are concerned, it is always wise to seek a professional's opinion. Trust your instincts, and know that help is available.

Birth to 12 Months



- Does not make eye contact
- Babbles very little or not at all
- Lack of response to loud noises
- Does not turn head towards familiar sounds
- Limited imitation of sounds, words, and/or facial expressions
- Does not attempt to communicate using gestures

12 to 18 Months



- Does not understand single words in context
- Says less than ten single words
- Does not recognize and point to objects

18 to 24 Months



- Difficulty following one-step directions
- Does not say "mama" or "dada"
- Only uses gestures to communicate
- Does not follow adult gestures such as pointing

24 to 36 Months



- Does not string two or three words together
- Speech is unintelligible to all listeners
- Does not ask or answer basic questions
- Plays alone and does not seek help

Preschool Age (3 to 5 years)



- Difficulty understanding directions
- Only produces short phrases, not complete sentences
- Speech is unintelligible
- Leaves out function words when speaking (e.g., is, the)
- Primarily uses gestures and noises to communicate

School Age (5 to 12 years)



- Has a hard time reading, writing, and/or spelling
- Does not maintain a topic during conversation
- Needs directions to be repeated multiple times
- Lack of receptive language
- Uses simple language to produce narratives
- Difficulty recalling information
- Difficulty creating and maintaining friendships