

Hearing and speech development

Hearing affects speech and language development. It is **very** important to watch for signs of hearing loss during the first two years. Below are some ways to check your child's hearing and ways to help with speech and language development.

Age	Children should	Ways to help with speech and language development
0 to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sometimes stir or wake up when someone talks or makes a loud noise • sometimes startle or jump when a loud sound occurs, like a cough, a dog bark, or a dish breaking • be soothed by a familiar voice 	<p>Whenever your baby makes sounds, try to imitate them. Use a pleasant voice when talking.</p> <p>Hold your baby close to you often while rocking or singing. Talk quietly to your baby.</p> <p>Talk to your baby while you work around the house. Use your child's name.</p>
5 to 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • look towards sounds or when their name is called and they do not see the person calling • wake up when someone talks or makes a loud sound • enjoy rattles and other sound making toys • make a variety of cooing and gurgling sounds 	<p>Keep imitating your baby's sounds, talking to him or her, and singing.</p> <p>Continue to hold your baby close to you often, singing or talking.</p> <p>Talk to your baby about his or her toys.</p> <p>Play games with your baby such as "Pat-a-cake" and "Peek-a-boo."</p>
9 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • turn their head in any direction to find a sound • respond to their name when spoken quietly • use their voice to get attention • begin to make two-syllable sounds, such as "mama, dada" 	<p>Make simple speech sounds, such as "buh-buh, gah-gah, ooh-oo," and see if your baby will imitate you.</p> <p>Reward your baby's sounds by repeating or saying them back.</p> <p>Keep on talking to your baby about toys, what you are doing together, and the surroundings.</p> <p>Play singing games with your baby.</p>

Age	Children should	Ways to help with speech and language development
12 to 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow simple directions • begin to repeat some of the sounds you make • use words of more than one syllable, such as kitty or cookie • turn their head in any direction to find an interesting sound or the person speaking 	<p>Show your baby the parts of his or her body, such as “Here’s baby’s nose, here’s baby’s ear,” and put baby’s hand to them.</p> <p>Show your child simple picture books, telling him or her to turn the pages. Talk about each picture.</p> <p>Play “Where’s daddy” (or mama) and point to daddy (or mama). Or ask “Where’s the doggy” or a toy and point to it. Explain sounds: “What does the doggy say? Bow-wow.”</p>
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • without seeing your lips, point to at least one part of the body when you ask, “Where’s your foot?” or “Where’s your nose?” • without seeing your lips, point to the correct picture if you ask, “Where’s the cat?” (or dog or man) • without seeing your lips, follow directions such as “Give me the ball” or “Put the block on the table.” • begin to use two-word phrases, such as “ Drink milk” or “Go bye-bye.” 	<p>Read simple books to your child. Point out the pictures and ask questions, such as “Where’s the kitty?”</p> <p>Ask your child to put things in places. For example, “Put the dolly on the chair” or “Put the ball under the table.”</p> <p>Talk to your child about everything he or she plays with or sees.</p>

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. Your child’s hearing can be accurately tested at any age by a pediatric audiologist. If you have concerns or questions about your child’s hearing, please call your doctor, or the Children’s Minnesota audiology department at 612-874-1292.