

I have tried my best to translate some of this information that I found on the site from the Icelandic hearing and speech pathology center because I wanted you to have as much information as you could.

Language development in children

Children's speech is an interaction of many factors. Children have an innate ability to pay attention to the voices and faces around them, and they are tuned in to learn the language they hear in their immediate environment. The social aspect of language learning is invaluable and the old Icelandic saying is true: Börnin læra það sem fyrir þeim er haft or in English: The children learn what they hear and see.

Language development in a child is the subject of parents, preschool teachers, developmental therapists, speech pathologists and others who closely observe how the child learns the language. Next we will be looking into various aspects of language development, the main speech and language skills and issues related to children's language stimulation, to name a few.

If you as a parent suspect that your child's language development does not follow the typical language development of his peers, there is usually good reason to take note of that suspicion. The information that appears here is intended to be a guide for parents, preschool staff and those who are interested in children's language development about the state of children's language development at different ages.

Children with language disorders may find it difficult to:

- listen to others and pay attention
- connect with other people
- understand what is said to them
- learn and use new words
- join two or more words together in sentences
- engage in conversation

Abnormalities in speech include the child having:

- pronunciation difficulties (not pronouncing all the vowels correctly and clearly)
- stuttering (words and sentences are not spoken properly)
- hoarseness of voice (e.g. the voice is constantly high and airy and the child quickly gets tired of talking)
- an abnormal nasal sound that makes it considered abnormal to listeners

Development of children's language and speech

Listening and understanding

<p>0 – 3 months Responds to sounds Gets quiet or smiles when you talk to it Increases or decreases suction in response to sound</p>	<p>4 – 6 months old Turns his head towards the sound Responds to sound variations in your voice Pays attention to toys that make sounds Pays attention to music</p>
<p>7 – 11 months Understands no-no Likes games like peek-a-boo Turns head purposefully toward sound Listens when spoken to Recognizes common words such as glass, shoe or milk Begins to react when told e.g. Come here or Want more?</p>	<p>12 - 17 months Examines a toy or book for at least 2 minutes Follows simple instructions supported by gestures Responds to simple questions Points to familiar objects, pictures and family members when asked</p>
<p>18 - 23 months old Points to body parts such as the nose, mouth or hair Begins to listen to short stories, verses and songs Follows simple instructions without signs or gestures Understands simple actions such as eating, sleeping or falling</p>	<p>2 – 2 ½ years old Understands prepositions (terms of position) such as in and on top of Understands the personal pronouns you, mine, his Understands the adjectives big, good, bad Follows instructions such as Get your shoes</p>
<p>2 ½ – 3 years old The child responds if asked about things he knows but can't see, e.g. Get your ball and put it in the box Understands many opposite terms such as hot and cold, up and down, in and out Understands the personal pronouns I, you, her etc. Can understand primary colors such as yellow, red and blue Knows all the quantitative concepts like <i>everyone</i> and <i>all</i>.</p>	<p>3 – 4 years old Enjoys it more and more when it is read to - likes to hear the same story over and over again Enjoys verses and ridiculous statements, e.g. the horse flew high into the air Categorize objects and concepts in pictures, e.g. food, clothes, stuff, kids Knows most colors</p>

<p>4 – 5 years old Understands relatively complex questions Understands most of what is talked about at home and in kindergarten</p>	<p>5 – 6 years old Can follow multiple instructions and carry them out. Example: Take the big red ball and place it next to the blue box Understands and can explain a sequence of events (first happened..., then..., but lastly...) Understands and likes rhymes and rhyming stories.</p>
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Speech

<p>0 – 3 months Spontaneous sound production</p>	<p>4 – 6 months old Play for sounds increases</p>
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<p>Expresses pleasure / displeasure with sounds Babbling Smiles when it sees you</p>	<p>Begins to babble; forms consonants such as mamamama, dadadada Increasingly indicates with voice when it is happy or unhappy</p>
<p>7 – 11 months The chatter increases and the variety of sounds becomes greater Mimics speech sounds Uses voice to get attention Words or sounds like mamma and babba can start to carry meaning Tries to express himself through actions and gestures</p>	<p>12 - 17 months It is normal for them to use two or three words for characters or things, but gradually the vocabulary is added. Each word can have more than one meaning Try to imitate simple words</p>
<p>18 - 23 months old Mostly uses the consonants n, m, b, d, h with vowels Says anything from 10 words up to 90 (big individual differences), e.g. shoes, socks or milk. Pronunciation still unclear and the words can sound like sho, sok, mik Mimics several animal sounds Begins to connect words such as more candy or daddy is coming Begins to use the simplest personal pronouns such as my or mine</p>	<p>2 – 2 ½ years old Says at least 50 words (even has about 400 words at the age of 2 ½) Uses the personal pronouns he and she Sentences get longer, e.g. from mom come (about 2 years old) to mom come home (about 2 ½ years old) Uses more consonants and the pronunciation becomes clearer little by little</p>

<p>2 ½ – 3 years old Uses the personal pronouns me, he and she Speaks in at least three to four word sentences Asking for things with a question, e.g. my car? or Where's my hat? Uses plural words such as cars, dolls, balls Uses a specific article, e.g. the girl, the house, the elephant Can produce most speech sounds. Tends to drop a consonant at the beginning of a word even though it can form the same sound in the middle or at the end of a word. Often does not speak with r, s, and th Simple consonant combinations, e.g. a ship will be gip and a horse will be hot and cooking will be cookie It can be assumed that the closest relatives understand most of the child's speech</p>	<p>3 – 4 years old Often asks where - who - what questions Can explain in a simple way what we use individual things for, e.g. fork or car Can answer questions such as What do you do when you are cold? or What do you do when you have to pee? Uses the past tense of weak verbs, e.g. jumped, walked Repeats short sentences Sometimes the child repeats the same sound or word, especially at the beginning of sentences. Called "toddler stutter". This is especially true for the age between 2 ½ - 3 ½ years Counts to 5 and knows the number values 1-3 (gets three balls if asked) Can repeat three numbers in a row, e.g. 5 7 1</p>
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	<p>or 6 5 2 etc.</p> <p>The vast majority of speech sounds have arrived, but the child likes to simplify complex consonant combinations, e.g. crawling Many children have not mastered r, s or th</p> <p>Strangers understand most of what the child says when they approach the age of four</p> <p>Has at least 600 words in the vocabulary when approaching the age of four</p> <p>Uses -ði, and -di/ti past tense.</p> <p>Uses the strong past participle in certain verbs, e.g. was, fell, saw, but uses the weak past tense in most strong verbs (e.g. played will be played; ran, ran, etc.)</p> <p>Uses more complex plural forms than before, e.g. books, children, balloons</p> <p>The child can express himself about what he has been doing in the kindergarten or at a playmate's house</p> <p>Often uses sentences containing four or more words</p>
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<p>4 – 5 years old</p> <p>Uses sentences that contain detailed information, e.g. My grandmother lives in a yellow house with a red roof</p> <p>Vastly increased vocabulary</p> <p>Increasingly uses strong verb conjugations, e.g. read, drank, but still often substitutes a weak declension for a strong one (see 3-4 years old)</p> <p>Can explain how to do things, e.g. to draw a picture or get ready for bed</p> <p>Explains words like What is a towel? or What are apples?</p> <p>Answers why questions</p> <p>The words are well understood. However, some children lack r and s. Certain combinations of sounds are still confusing for the child, e.g. blaðra becomes blarða, útvarp becomes ubart and kartafla becomes karpatla. It can be expected that the child has mastered the pronunciation of these words around the age of five</p>	<p>5 – 6 years old</p> <p>Can form at least eight word sentences</p> <p>Uses longer and more complex sentence structure (with extra clauses and conjunctions, e.g. When I grow up I'm going to be a pilot and a policeman)</p> <p>Uses imagination to improve their stories</p> <p>May still be missing an r sound. Few children have mastered hn as in the word hnífur.</p>
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General speech stimulation of children

Talk with the child

Strong language stimulation is always a good thing. You need to take the time to talk to your child, whether it's during play or everyday activities. But the child must also have room to understand what we say and we need to give them time to answer.

Let's use the same words - in different contexts

Children are constantly learning new words, and to make it easier for them to expand their vocabulary, we need to be a good role model for them. Example: "Look at the ball. This red ball is really nice. You have almost exactly the same ball. Shall we put the little red ball in the box?" "Are you hot? Yes, I know, it's boiling hot in here!" "Are you hungry? I'm also very hungry / I'm very hungry too."

Put activities into words

Let's talk about what we do every day, inside and outside the home. For example, when we are cooking ("now I put water in the pot and then I put the fish in it. Mmm... I like fish so much"), buy food, wash the car, hang laundry, etc. Let's talk when we play with the child without asking direct questions that require a yes/no answer ("Where is the red block? Here it is, now I put it on top of the green block.").

Let's talk about events in past tense, present tense and future tense

Young children live in the present. We need to build on it little by little, talk about what has happened and what is yet to happen. This way, the child learns to perceive time and we lay the foundation for organizing a narrative. Let's talk about what we're going to do afterwards ("first we're going to go swimming and then we're going to visit grandma. Maybe she'll give us ice cream."). Then you can recall fun events ("Do you remember what we did yesterday? First we went swimming and then to Grandma's. Do you remember Grandma gave us a nice ice cream?"). It's might help to have pictures to lean on when recalling fun events.

Let's be a good role model for the child

Let's try to get a feel for the child's language comprehension. We use sentences that we know the child understands, but we constantly add new words and concepts. We use gestures for clarification (e.g. point to objects or pictures) and explain words or use synonyms ("do you know that boy means the same as lad?"). Be careful not to talk too fast.

Introducing new words and concepts to the child

In play or daily activities, it is good to mention colors, numbers and letters when this is relevant. Let's talk about terms of position (e.g. under, over, around, next to, etc.), descriptive terms (e.g. this puddle is shallow but this one is deep, or, this ball is bigger than this one and this one is smaller). Name a body part, e.g. when bathing or sleeping. Let's talk about different textures, e.g. clothing (soft, rough) etc. Anything we can think of!

Echoing

It is often said that direct grammar corrections are not effective, at least not when the child is young. Have the "correct" language for the child by repeating what they say correctly. Example: The child says, "the doll slept with me in bed last night." We say to the child, "did the doll sleep in bed with you all night?" We even repeat the words or the sentence in a different context.

Let's read every day

It is becoming clearer that reading to children involves a lot of good language stimulation. When we read, we stimulate children's vocabulary, they get to know a different kind of language than we normally use, and it is healthy and good to read the same books over and over again. The children perceive the structure of the narrative, the organization of the sequence of events, word order and sentence structure. At the beginning of reading, we should look at the book cover with the child, guess the name of the book and consider the content of the book based on the title. When we read, we need to have clear punctuation, exaggerate slight nuances, point to pictures as we read, explain words and concepts briefly if necessary or mention other words for clarification. Let's start reading to children as soon as they can follow large and simple pictures (usually from the age of three months).

Encourage the child to talk

It is good for the child to learn to organize a narrative and tell about events. We need to be good role models. Let's talk about our day before we ask what they were doing in kindergarten. Let's reminisce about fun events together. For children who do not perceive events well and have difficulty telling stories, it is good to use diaries that go e.g. between home and kindergarten. Most people find it convenient to include pictures (e.g. from "Pictogram" or "Board maker" or even real pictures, e.g. from digital cameras) to stimulate the child to tell.

Let's create stories together

Let's tell stories from ourselves or from pictures. Let's encourage the child to do the same. Write

down stories that the child tells. You can make a small book with blank pages, record stories and let the child decorate the book. It is also nice to cut out comic strips from newspapers, arrange them in the right order and paste them into a book. The child is then encouraged to "read" the story and trace it from left to right (similar to text in books).

Language stimulation in the car

Most people spend a considerable amount of time each day in a car. Let's use this time to stimulate the child's speech, e.g. recall the events of the day, mention landmarks, sing or recite verses, whatever. Let's not let that get in the way of driving though!

Let's sing together

Let's sing for or with the child right from birth. Let's learn what is being sung in the kindergarten. Listen to tapes or CDs with fun songs that you can sing. Children like to add new (nonsense) lyrics to old songs. It is good to read fun rhyming verses or poems with a plot to the child, e.g. The cat in the hat. Let's play with rhymes and encourage the child to "rhyme". Some children don't like to sing because they can't handle the words or the rhythm (rhythm). With these children, it is suitable to use symbols (cf. Symbols with speech) and sing slowly and rhythmically. Most children enjoy singing – sooner or later!

Pretend play

Let's play pretend with the children. It can be doll, shop, cop or doctor games or pretend to talk on the phone. Let's be good at using pretend objects to activate and develop the child's imagination.

Jokes

Children quickly develop a sense of humor. From a young age, you can babble with them and make strange sounds and words. Later you can play with words and sentences. Homemade, simple jokes are often the funniest.

Riddles

Let's ask the children simple riddles, e.g. What's small and furry and barking whoop, whoop? What is red and grows on trees? You can also play games like I spy... (describe an object and the child tries to guess).

Cartoons on TV

Let's watch a movie or cartoon on TV with the child. Let's talk about the movie and review the plot. Consider with the child how the story could have ended differently. Let's ask open-ended questions (not questions that require only yes or no answers). Encourage the child not to sit in front of the TV screen for a long time.

Computer games or apps

There are all kinds of language-stimulating games. Don't forget that we stimulate the child by being in his presence and talking to him - and above all, letting him express himself.

Where to turn

Children in kindergarten and elementary school have the right to the services of a speech pathologist if that service is available in their community. If you are concerned about the language development of a young child who has not yet started kindergarten, you should contact the Child Protection Department at the Health Service.

If the child starts kindergarten in a community where the services of a speech pathologist are available, a language development assessment must be applied at the community. In all areas in the capital, speech pathologists work to analyze the various speech and language disorders in children. It is best to contact the special education director of the preschool the child attends, who can then apply for a speech development assessment for the child from speech pathologists.

In many places outside the capital area, speech pathologists work within the community, who carry out language development assessments for children who live there. If the child starts kindergarten but there is no speech pathologist service available, you can apply for a speech development assessment from the speech pathologists of the Hearing and Speech Pathology Center of Iceland. A referral must be received from a doctor or nurse.

Offices of self-employed speech pathologists analyze language development and other speech disorders. Children who have received a speech development assessment by their local community and who fall under the criteria of Sjúkratryggingar Íslands for subsidizing speech therapy. Parents themselves have to register the child on the waiting list at the clinics.