<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Speech and Language Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening and attention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speech sounds and talk</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Communication</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Birth to 11 months</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Up to 3 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening and attention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speech sounds and talk</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Turns towards a familiar sound</td>
<td>• Recognises parent’s voice</td>
<td>• Frequently cries especially when unhappy or uncomfortable</td>
<td>• Gazes at faces and copies facial movements e.g. sticking out tongue</td>
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<td>• Startled by loud noises</td>
<td>• Often calmed by familiar, friendly voice e.g. parent’s</td>
<td>• Makes vocal sounds, e.g. cooing, gurgling</td>
<td>• Makes eye contact for fairly long periods</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3 - 6 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening and attention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speech sounds and talk</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Watches face when someone talks</td>
<td>• Shows excitement at sound of approaching voices</td>
<td>• Makes vocal noises to get attention</td>
<td>• Senses different emotions in parent’s voice and may respond differently, for example smile, quieten, laugh</td>
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<td><strong>6 - 12 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening and attention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speech sounds and talk</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Locates source of voice with accuracy</td>
<td>• Understands frequently used words such as ‘all gone’, ‘no’ and ‘bye-bye’</td>
<td>• Uses speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults; says sounds like ‘ba-ba, no-no, go-go’</td>
<td>• Enjoys action rhymes and songs</td>
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<td>• Focuses on different sounds e.g. telephone, doorbell, clock</td>
<td>• Stops and looks when he hears own name</td>
<td>• Stops babbling when hears familiar adult voice</td>
<td>• Tries to copy adult speech and lip movements</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understands simple instructions when supported by gesture and context</td>
<td>• Understands single words in context, e.g. ‘cup’, ‘milk’, ‘daddy’</td>
<td>• Uses gestures such as waving &amp; pointing to help communicate</td>
<td>• Takes ‘turns’ in conversations (using babble)</td>
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<td><strong>12 - 15 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening and attention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speech sounds and talk</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attends to music and singing</td>
<td>• Understands single words in context, e.g. ‘cup’, ‘milk’, ‘daddy’</td>
<td>• May say around 10 single words, although these may only be recognizable in context and to a familiar carer.</td>
<td>• Likes being with familiar adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Enjoys sound-making toys/ objects</td>
<td>• Understands more words than they can say</td>
<td>• Reaches or points to something they want whilst vocalizing.</td>
<td>• Likes watching adults for short periods of time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understands simple instructions in context, e.g. ‘kiss mummy’, ‘give to daddy’, ‘stop’</td>
<td>• Understands single words and some two-word phrases, e.g. ‘give me’, ‘shoe on’</td>
<td>• Enjoyz babbling and copying sounds and words.</td>
<td>• Learns that their voice and actions have effects on others</td>
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<td><strong>15 - 18 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening and attention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speech sounds and talk</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Listens and responds to simple information/ instructions e.g. ‘Ben, put on shoes’, ‘Mohammed, give to Daddy’</td>
<td>• Understands a wide range of single words and some two-word phrases, e.g. ‘give me’, ‘shoe on’</td>
<td>• Still babbles but using some single words correctly, although may not be clear</td>
<td>• Simple pretend play</td>
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<td>• Likes to explore their environment</td>
<td>• Recognizes and points to objects and pictures in books if asked</td>
<td>• Copies gesture and words from adults</td>
<td>• Developing interaction with adults and enjoys sharing experiences</td>
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<td>• Gives named familiar objects to adult, e.g. coat, car, apple, book</td>
<td>• Gives named familiar objects to adult, e.g. ‘mum’, ‘tete’ (teddy)</td>
<td>• Uses sounds and words to communicate for a range of purposes e.g. requesting, naming, refusing</td>
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| 22 - 36 months | • Single channelled attention  
• Child can either concentrate on instructions or on task.  
• Can concentrate on only one speaker  
• Adult must direct where to attend, using child’s name helps focus | • Identifies action words by pointing to the right picture e.g. “Who’s jumping?”  
• Developing understanding of simple concepts including in/on/under, big/little  
• Understands phrases like ‘put teddy in the box’, ‘get your book, coat and bag’, ‘draw a big brown dog’  
• Understands ‘who’ and ‘what’ and ‘where’ questions but not ‘why’  
• Understands a simple story when supported with pictures, individually or in a small group | • They may often use actions or physical means of getting their message across rather than using appropriate language e.g. taking toy and saying “I have it”  
• Links four to five words together  
• Learning to engage others in their play  
• Able to use pronouns (me, him, she), plurals and prepositions (in, on, under)  
• Speech sounds are still developing  
• They may often use actions or physical means of getting their message across rather than using appropriate language e.g. taking toy and saying “I have it”  
• Links four to five words together  
• Learning to engage others in their play  
• Able to use pronouns (me, him, she), plurals and prepositions (in, on, under)  
• Speech sounds are still developing | • Holds a conversation but jumps from topic to topic  
• Interested in others’ play and will join in  
• Expresses emotions towards adults and peers using words, not just actions e.g. saying “no” in a cross voice  
• Responds to the feeling of others |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 30 - 50 months | • Listens to others in one to one or small groups when conversation interests them  
• Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall  
• Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories  
• Focusing attention – still listen or do, but can shift own attention  
• Is able to follow directions (if not intently focused on own choice of activity) | • Understands use of objects (e.g. “What do we use to cut things?”)  
• Understands questions or instructions with two parts, e.g. ‘get your jumper and stand by the door’  
• Shows understanding of prepositions such as “under”, “on top”, “behind” by carrying out an action or selecting correct picture  
• Beginning to understand “How?” and ‘Why?’ questions  
• Aware of time in relation to past, present and future, e.g. “today we are having banana, yesterday we had rice cakes. I wonder what we’ll have tomorrow?” (towards four years) | • Beginning to use more complex sentences to link thoughts (e.g. using and, because)  
• Can retell a simple past event in correct order (e.g. “I went down slide, hurt finger”)  
• Uses talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next, recall and relive past experiences  
• Questions why things happen and gives explanations. Asks who, what, when, how type questions  
• Uses a range of tenses (e.g. play, playing, will play, played)  
• Speech should be able to be understood. Some immaturities may persist e.g. ‘wed’ for red, ‘byder’ for spider | • Understands turn-taking as well as sharing with adults and peers, may need some adult support with this  
• Initiates conversations  
• Enjoys playing with peers and forms friendships  
• Beginning to express needs/feelings – uses words, not just actions  
• Talks freely about home and community |
| 40 – 60 months | • Sustains attentive listening, responding to what they have heard with relevant comments, questions or actions  
• Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly when appropriate  
• Two-channelled attention – can listen and do for short span  
• Integrated attention – can listen and do in range of situations with range of people; varies according to the demands of the task | • Able to follow a simple story without pictures or props  
• Understands instructions containing sequencing words; ‘first… after… last’  
• Understands more abstract concepts - soft, hard, smooth, rough, long, short, tall etc  
• Demonstrates understanding of “how?” and “why?” questions by giving explanations  
• Understands humour, e.g. nonsense rhymes, jokes  
• Uses well formed sentences e.g. ‘I played with Ben at lunchtime’ but there may still be some grammatical errors  
• Easily understood by adults and peers, with only a few immaturities in speech sounds, for example ‘th’ and ‘r’ and three consonant combinations, e.g. ‘scr’ible  
• Frequently asks the meaning of unfamiliar words and may use them randomly  
• Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play  
• Uses language to imagine & recreate roles and experiences in play situations | • Uses well formed sentences e.g. ‘I played with Ben at lunchtime’ but there may still be some grammatical errors  
• Easily understood by adults and peers, with only a few immaturities in speech sounds, for example ‘th’ and ‘r’ and three consonant combinations, e.g. ‘scr’ible  
• Frequently asks the meaning of unfamiliar words and may use them randomly  
• Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play  
• Uses language to imagine & recreate roles and experiences in play situations | • Has confidence to speak to others about their own wants, interests and opinions  
• Initiates conversation, attends to and takes account of what others say  
• Explains own knowledge and understanding, and asks appropriate questions of others  
• Shows awareness of the listener when speaking  
• Expresses needs/feelings in appropriate ways  
• Forms good relationships with adults & peers and chooses own friends  
• Works as part of a group or class, taking turns |  
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