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| **6 months old** | **1 year old** | **18 months old** | **2 years old** | **3 years old** | **4 years old** | **5 years old** |
| * Make sounds to themselves and with other people, e.g. cooing, gurgling and babbling.
* Make noises to get attention.
* Watch a person’s face when they are talking to them.
* Show excitement when they hear voices coming.
* Smile and laugh when others do.
* Make sounds in response to someone talking to them.
 | * Make talking noises, including strings of sounds.
* Point and look at people to get attention.
* May be able to say some words and use gestures.
* Start to understand some words, e.g. bye-bye, especially those with a linked gesture.
* Recognise the names of familiar objects.
* Look at somebody when they are speaking or when they hear their name called.
* Take turns in ‘conversations’ – babbling back to an adult.
 | * Say around 20 words – they may not sound mature but are consistent.
* Understand some simple words and short phrases (usually those that are repeated regularly).
* Recognise and point to familiar objects when you ask them to.
* Enjoy games likes ‘peek-a-boo’ and toys that make noises.
* Strat to explore their world and enjoy simple pretend play.
 | * Use over 50 single words.
* Be starting to put short sentences together with two or three words.
* Be asking simple questions.
* Understand between 200 and 500 words.
* Understand simple questions and instructions.
* Enjoy pretend play.
* Usually make noises or talk while playing.
* Become frustrated if they cannot get their message across.
 | * Use up to 300 words and can use different words for different things, e.g. description of what things look like; where something is.
* Refer to something that has happened in the past.
* Put 4 or 5 words together to make short sentences.
* Ask lots of questions.
* Have clearer speech. This may still include some immaturities, e.g. finding it difficult to say ‘r’.
* Listen to and remember simple stories with pictures.
* Understand longer instructions.
* Understand simple ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘where’ questions.
* Join in with other children playing.
* Play more imaginatively.
* Be able to have a conversation.
* Recognise others’ feelings and begin to show empathy.
 | * Ask lots of questions using question words.
* Be able to answer ‘why’ questions.
* Use longer sentences and link them together simply.
* Describe things that have already happened.
* Have mostly clear speech.
* Listen to longer stories and answer questions about them.
* Understand and use colour, number and time related words.
* Enjoy make-believe play.
* Start to enjoy simple jokes.
* Start to be able to make plans for games with others.
 | * Take turns in longer conversations.
* Use well-formed sentences.
* Using a wide range of words.
* Thinking about the meaning of some words.
* Be able to re-tell short stories.
* Use most speech sounds correctly.
* Enjoy listening to stories, rhymes and songs and start to make up their own.
* Ask relevant questions and make relevant comments.
* Understand spoken instructions without stopping what they are doing.
* Understand more complicated language, e.g. first, last, might, maybe, above, in-between.
* Understand sequencing words.
* Take on different roles in imaginative play.
* Use talk to help work out problems, organise their thinking and take part in activities.
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