

# Ages and Stages of Language Development [Introductory notes]

Age	Receptive Language	Expressive language	Other Information
Prenatal life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hearing language sounds at 7 months gestation</li> <li>Baby becomes familiar with the rhythm and melody of their mother's language</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baby's mirror neurons may fire in response to hearing mother's language</li> </ul>
Birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language sounds are now distinct rather than muted by amniotic fluid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baby can hear their own voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-hearing children go through the following stages through to 6 months old</li> </ul>
Birth to 2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the emotions communicated by language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Cooing', vowel sounds</li> </ul>	
3 to 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intently watching the mouth of whoever is speaking to them</li> <li>Facial reaction to hearing unfamiliar language spoken</li> <li>Able to understand familiar words e.g. 'Where is Dad?' and indicate understanding by moving eyes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wet rasping noises</li> <li>Mirror neuron activity results in mouth movement imitation</li> <li>Beginning to make consonant sounds</li> </ul>	
4 to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of words understood increases significantly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanical babbling sounds</li> </ul>	
6 to 8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the meaning of certain words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanical babbling increases but starts to reflect the sounds the baby is hearing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sounds that baby makes reflect the sounds heard in the environment</li> <li>Deaf babies stop babbling</li> </ul>
8 to 10 months		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing number of combinations of sounds</li> <li>Babbling conversation</li> <li>Might hear isolated words embedded in the babbling</li> <li>Beginning to use gestures to communicate e.g. pointing</li> </ul>	
10 to 12 months		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Might hear isolated words embedded in the babbling</li> <li>Increasing number of consonant sounds</li> <li>First understood word (12 months)</li> </ul>	

<p>12 to 18 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding more and more language</li> <li>• Able to follow simple instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning to play games (mimicking)</li> <li>• Vocabulary expands to 50 words</li> <li>• Telegraphic speech (aided by facial expression and gesture)</li> <li>• Speaking in 3 word sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once expressive language reaches the 50 word mark, the vocabulary expands by 4 words per day</li> </ul>
<p>18 months to 3 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in understanding of more and more complex language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language explosion which includes all parts of speech, with some mis-articulation</li> <li>• Progresses from single words to 2-3 word phrases and then to longer and longer sentences</li> </ul>	