



## PEEL PRESCHOOL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Peel Preschool Speech and Language Services is a community partnership designed to deliver speech and language services for preschool children from birth until they become eligible for Senior Kindergarten.

We provide a wide range of services including:

- Community based screening clinics
- Consultation to families and early childhood facilities
- Community education
- Assessment
- Home Programming
- Ongoing Monitoring
- Group and/or Individual therapy with a Speech Language Pathologist or Communicative Disorders Assistant

This pamphlet tells you how most children learn to communicate and respond to language at different ages. Keep in mind that each child is different. If you think that your baby or child is not learning to communicate at his/her appropriate age level, refer to the information at the end of this pamphlet. The sooner a speech and language problem is identified, the better. Don't wait.

### HOW BABIES LEARN TO COMMUNICATE (0-2 YEARS)

A baby learns to communicate by listening to voices and sounds. Soon your baby will begin to make sounds to tell you how he/she feels or what he/she wants. Babies develop at their own rate. Some babies will do things at a young age. Some babies will take a little longer. Here are some things that most babies do.

Very young babies (up to **3 months** old) will:

- make noises (e.g. coos, gurgles)
- turn towards a new sound
- jump at a loud noise
- be calmed when you talk in a gentle voice
- smile at you

By **6 months**, most babies will:

- watch your face when you talk
- cry in a different way when hungry
- make noises to get attention
- make sounds back when you talk
- smile at you and other family members



### When to call for help:

- Your baby does not react to your voice or other sounds.
- Your baby does not smile or make sounds when awake.

### How you can help your young baby learn

- talk to your baby a lot when you are washing, dressing or feeding him/her
- sing songs or nursery rhymes
- play simple games like “peek-a-boo”
- show your child picture books and talk about what you see
- face your child when you talk to him/her

### By **12 months**, most children will:

- understand their own name
- understand words like “bye-bye” or “up”
- say sounds like “ba ba, na na, ga ga”
- laugh and try to make sounds like you do

### When to call for help:

- Your baby does not wave back at you when you say “bye bye” and wave.
- Your baby does not try to show you things by reaching or looking.

### By **15 months**, most children will:

- take turns making sounds
- say 2 or 3 words, but not clearly
- understand “no” and shake his/her head
- reach or point to something they want while making a sound
- understand simple questions or directions like “where is your nose?”, “show me your shoe”

### When to call for help:

- Your child does not try to say words, make sounds or gestures to tell you what he or she wants.

### By **18 months**, most children will:

- understand words and points to parts of their bodies like “nose, ear”
- will look for things when asked to, like “get your hat”
- make new gestures and/or words like you do
- make gestures or ask for “more” or “again”

### When to call for help:

- Your child does not make gestures and sounds like you do.
- Your child started to use words, but stopped.

### By **21 months**, most children will:

- point to a picture or sign, such as when asked “Where’s McDonalds?”
- play with toys and pretend to do things like feeding a doll or going in a car
- say about 20 or more words
- follow directions such as “drink your juice” or “sit down please”

### When to call for help:

- Your child uses less than 10 words.
- Your child does not pretend play with toys.

### By **24 months**, most children will:

- understand more than they can say
- say two words together like “more milk”
- say “what’s that” (may sound like “wha dat” or “whatssat”)
- can pick one thing out from a group of objects, such as a cup
- enjoy listening to stories, songs and rhymes
- point to pictures in a book when asked to, like “show me the truck”

### When to call for help:

- You have a hard time understanding what your child says.
- Your child uses very few words or does not put words together.

### How you can help your child learn at this age

- Talk simply, clearly and slowly when talking to your child.
- Look at your child when he or she communicates with you. Praise your child’s efforts to communicate.
- Play children’s music and stories and listen with your child.
- Talk about new places and experiences, before you go while you are there, and when your get home.
- Expand on what the child says. If the child says, “dog”, you say, “big dog”.
- Ask questions that encourage your child to talk.

## HOW A CHILD’S SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPS (2-5 YEARS)

Between the ages of 2 years and 5 years, most children learn a great deal. The number of words they can say increases quickly. Their use of speech increases, as they come to ask many questions during their daily routines. They enjoy listening to stories and music. Often they will ask you to read the same story over and over again. Sometimes they will remember the words so well it will seem like they can almost read. By the time your child is ready to go to school, he or she should be able to communicate and listen well.

### By **3 years**, most children will:

- use short sentences, like “me do it”, “daddy going car”
- follow simple directions, like “put the teddy bear to bed”
- place something in the right spot if you say to put it “in”, “on” or “under”
- have a conversation with family members or other familiar people
- listen to stories and answer simple questions
- begin to add endings to words, such as running, toys

### When to call for help:

- Your child acts frustrated when trying to communicate.
- You have a hard time understanding what your child says.
- Your child does not put more than 2 words together.
- Your child does not listen well.

By **4 years**, most children will:

- use sentences of 4 to 6 words
- give directions like “fix this for me”
- ask many questions like what, where, why
- talk about things they have done
- talk to themselves and their toys
- tell a story or sing a song
- tell you how they feel (“I’m tired”)

### When to call for help:

- Your child repeats words but does not seem to understand.
- Your child stutters.
- Other people have a hard time understanding what your child says.
- Your child uses words in an unusual way.

### How you can help your child learn at this age

- Listen as your child communicates with you. Nod your head or smile to show you understand. Answer when your child asks you a question.
- Let your child play with other children.
- Talk about how things are the same and how they are different.
- Help your child express feelings and ideas.
- Use words or sounds that your child finds difficult. Have your child look at your mouth as you say the sound clearly.
- Read longer stories. Encourage your child to tell stories using books and pictures.

By **5 years**, most children will:

- use sentences that sound almost like an adult
- be able to correctly pronounce most speech sounds
- explain the meaning of familiar words
- use sentences to describe objects and events
- explain how to solve a simple problem
- follow related directions, like “get your crayons, make a picture and put it on the fridge”
- recognize familiar signs such as a stop sign
- start to recognize letters and the sounds they make

### When to call for help:

- Your child does not use complete sentences.
- Your child does not like communicating with other children.
- Your child has trouble following directions.