



Loud and Clear
in the early years

Published by

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Content

This content was developed by the allied health professionals at Telethon Speech & Hearing. The book is designed to be used by those supporting children in the early years, highlighting speech, language and hearing development and difficulties in young children.

Project Partners

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What is the difference - speech and language?



Language is how we communicate with and understand our world.

- ▶ Language – refers to the words and sentences we use to express ourselves as well as our understanding of words and sentences



Speech is how we express ourselves.

- ▶ Speech – refers to the sounds we use to form words (c-a-t = cat)
- ▶ If we don't have the ability to communicate with our family and friends, we can become frustrated, withdrawn and isolated



Language is the code that we learn in order to express our needs and wants, and understand our world.

- ▶ Receptive Language: is our ability to understand and process incoming information
- ▶ Expressive Language: is our ability to convey thoughts and messages through spoken language

What are the risk factors for speech and hearing difficulty?



- ▶ Prematurity
- ▶ Family history of language delay and/or speech difficulties
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Middle ear infections
- ▶ Chronic illnesses
- ▶ Little babble as a baby
- ▶ Late talker

At 1: Understanding,



By 18 months a child's speech is normally 25% intelligible (Bowen, 2017)

- ▶ Makes eye contact with familiar people
- ▶ Understands their name and approximately 10 familiar routine words
- ▶ Recognises familiar games (e.g. peek-a-boo) and people/objects
- ▶ Demonstrates anticipation of familiar activities e.g. meal time

At 1: Spoken



- ▶ Vocalises to gain attention and have needs and wants met
- ▶ Babbles vowels and consonants in combinations
e.g. baba, doogaabee
- ▶ Copies adult pitch and duration patterns
- ▶ Imitates physical actions such as clapping and waving

At 2: Understanding



By 2 years a child's speech is normally 50-75% intelligible (Bowen, 2017)

- ▶ Understands up to 100 words
- ▶ Identifies body parts, clothing and objects in picture books
- ▶ Follows 2 part directions e.g. find your ball and shoes
- ▶ Use a wide range of words e.g. actions, locations, descriptives
- ▶ Responds to wh-questions What? and Where?

A photograph of a man with a beard and a young child sitting at a table. The man is leaning over the child, looking at a small piece of food (possibly a cracker) that the child is holding. The man is wearing a grey sweater over a blue and white striped shirt. The child is wearing a light blue shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

At 2: Spoken,

- ▶ Says more than 50 words
- ▶ Combines two words in a sentences e.g. ball gone, bye mum
- ▶ Use a wide range of words e.g. actions, locations, descriptives

At 3: Understanding



By 3 years a child's speech is normally 50-75% intelligible (Bowen, 2017)

- ▶ Understands more complex directions e.g. take the ball outside and give it to dad/pick up your hat, shoes and bag
- ▶ Understands simple descriptions e.g. you can bounce and kick it

At 3: Understanding continued



- ▶ Displays more attention to a simple narrative and comprehension of the narrative
- ▶ Understands more wh - questions e.g. What's....doing? Who's...?

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair in pigtails, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. She is holding a white toy mobile phone to her ear with her right hand. The background is plain white.

At 3: Spoken,

- ▶ Starts to participate in conversations, however, may not take many turns or stay on topic
- ▶ Predominantly use 4 to 5 word sentences to communicate

At 3: Spoken, continued



- ▶ Starts to ask wh - questions such as What? Where? Who?
- ▶ More word types used in spoken language e.g. pronouns, plurals, past tense 'ed'

At 4: Understanding



- ▶ Literacy starts to emerge. Children start to become interested in sounds in words and written forms of words
- ▶ Starts to recognise their name when written
- ▶ Understands more complex questions e.g. How? Why?
- ▶ Understands time concepts : yesterday, today, tomorrow

At 4: Spoken,



- ▶ Able to retell or describe a recent event in detail
- ▶ Adds words such as 'but', 'because', 'and' to lengthen sentences
- ▶ Can count to five and name colours
- ▶ Asks lots of questions

A young child with dark hair, wearing a white bonnet with a lace trim, is looking off to the side. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a playground with blue and green structures.

Red Flags birth to 15 months,

- ▶ Limited or no vocalisations, e.g. cooing
- ▶ No babbling by 9 months
- ▶ Using gesture or single words to communicate
- ▶ By age 2 unable to comprehend routine simple directions
e.g. find your bag, show me your dog

Red Flags 15 months - 2 years



- ▶ May have delayed motor milestones
- ▶ Poor interaction style with adults and children
- ▶ Poor vocabulary less than 200-300 words
- ▶ Increase in behaviours such as head banging, throwing



Red Flags 3 - 4 years,

- ▶ Predominantly produces 1-2 word phrases
- ▶ Unable to answer simple questions or follow basic directions
- ▶ Poor attention to books and play tasks
- ▶ Play is repetitive and has no purpose

Red Flag - Speech Sounds



- ▶ Child is drooling more than other children of this age
- ▶ Family reports difficulties with feeding
- ▶ They miss the first consonant and/or last consonant in words



- ▶ Their spoken language sounds slushy, particularly the following consonants: /s/ /sh/ /ch/ /j/ /f/
- ▶ They are unable to make lip closure sounds such as /m/ /p/ /b/
- ▶ They have poor intelligibility of spoken language



What can
you do
to help?



Department of Communities
Department of Primary Industries
and Regional Development



Telethon
Speech & Hearing



Get
Face
to
Face

Make sure you get down to the child's level. This helps you:

- ▶ Connect with the child and share the moment together
- ▶ See what interests the child in their environment
- ▶ See when the child is sending you a message and what they are trying to tell you
- ▶ Help the child understand what you are saying

Following the child's lead,

- ▶ RESPOND – to the child with interest
- ▶ JOIN IN – play with the child
- ▶ IMITATE – the child's actions, sounds
- ▶ INTERPRET – the child's attempts to communicate
- ▶ COMMENT – on what the child is doing



Pause

- ▶ Children with speech and language difficulties may take longer to process auditory information
- ▶ The technique of pausing and waiting allows you to observe the child and then join in
- ▶ Pausing also allows and encourages a child to take a vocal turn



The Three As,

- Allow** – the child to lead the interaction
- Adapt** – your style to interact with the child
- Add** – language to the interaction by adding more information to the child's spoken words and repeating the child's utterance with the correct or improved grammar



Factors that will Affect Listening

- ▶ Distance from speaker – the further you are away from the child, the harder it is for them to hear you
- ▶ Reverberation is when sound is reflected off hard, shiny surfaces and creates echoes. This creates a more challenging listening environment
- ▶ Background noise is all the noise that isn't made by the educators or children and can include air-conditioners, computers, wind, cars etc

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Further information is available at: Raising Children Network
<https://raisingchildren.net.au>

www.wanslea.org.au

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