

When should a parent pursue Speech Therapy for their child?

Parents should consider seeking an evaluation with a Speech/Language Pathologist if their child demonstrates any of the following:

Birth to 2 months:

- Does not cry when hungry or uncomfortable
- Does not make comfort sounds or sucking sounds
- Cry does not vary in pitch, length and volume to indicate different needs
- Difficulty establishing/maintaining a rhythmical suck/swallow pattern
- Significant loss of breast milk/formula out of side of mouth during feeding

3 to 5 months:

- Vocalizes separately from body movements (sound is not a response to body movement)
- Inability to establish or maintain face to face communication during feeding
- Does not vocalize in response to sound stimulation
- Has not begun to laugh by 5 months in response to play
- Difficulty with feedings such as above

5 to 7 months:

- Does not babble during play or in response to stimulation (may suggest a hearing problem)
- Does not use voice to vocalize attitudes other than crying
- Does not respond to sound stimulation (indicative of hearing problems)
- Difficulty with swallowing early solids or other feeding issues

7 to 9 months:

- Does not look towards sounds or own name
- Is not babbling double consonants (bababa....)
- Difficulty with textures in foods (gagging, choking, etc.)
- Is unable to participate in conversations with adults using babbling noises
- Does not say "mama" or "dada" non-specifically
- Does not use different inflections to produce exclamations

9 to 12 months:

- Is unable to successfully eat early finger foods or munch/bite on foods
- Cannot babble single consonants such as "ba" or "da"
- Does not respond to words/language appropriately
- Does not experiment with language when playing independently
- Does not participate in conversations by responding with vocalizations

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12 to 15 months:

- Does not use inflection during vocalization
- Is not experimenting with language during play
- Is not using 1 to 3 words spontaneously while repeating additional words
- Does not vocalize or gesture to communicate needs
- Is not using "no" emphatically and meaningfully
- Is not using exclamatory expression such as "oh-oh", "No-no", "Ta-da", etc.

15 to 18 months:

- Is not attempting to sing songs
- Cannot use 10-15 words spontaneously
- Is not using vocalization in conjunction with gestures
- Does not use language to communicate needs
- Is not repeating sounds or words or imitating environmental sounds
- Is not jabbering tunelessly during play
- Continues to demonstrate eating problems (swallowing issues, choking, etc.)

18 to 24 months:

- Is not using jargon with good inflection
- Cannot label 2-4 pictures while looking at a book
- Is not putting 2-4 words together to form short sentences or communicate needs
- Does not understand nouns, verbs and modifiers and their uses
- Is not using intelligible words to communicate needs
- Cannot imitate 2-4 word phrases
- Does not relay experiences using jargon, words and/or gestures
- Does not have at least 50 - 100 words

24 to 33 months:

- Cannot sing phrases of songs
- Is not using three word sentences
- Is not using a wide range of consonant and vowel sounds
- Does not use past tense words "He runned"
- Is not expressing frustration at not being understood
- Does not use up to or more than 50 expressive words
- Is not imitating phrases or experimenting with new words
- Words are not clearly articulated

33 to 36 months:

- Is not responding to questions when asked things
- Is not producing correct beginning sounds of words
- Is having a hard time understanding prepositions
- Is not speaking in complete sentences
- Does not use plurals to refer to more than one (even if not correct)
- Is not participating in storytelling
- Does not have expressive vocabulary of 200 - 1000 words
- Is not using expressive vocabulary to communicate all needs
- Is not using sentences to communicate

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