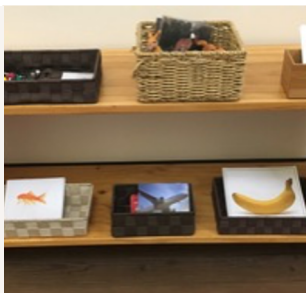


## COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Montessori Children's Foundation  
Learning Series



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## COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

How does language develop?

Expressing language

Receptive language

Multilingual homes

Language milestones



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## INTRODUCTION

- Communication begins at birth
- "Learning to communicate using speech and language is a primary developmental task for young children..."
- Language development requires four essential functions:
  1. Healthy, functioning *hearing* apparatus
  2. Healthy and functioning *vocal* apparatus
  3. An environment rich in language experiences
  4. A desire to communicate
- Language develop has two broad stages:
  - Pre-linguistic
  - Linguistic



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## HOW DOES LANGUAGE DEVELOP?

### PRE-LINGUISTIC STAGE

1. The time from birth until the baby's first intentional word.
2. Four main phases:
  - a. **0-2 months - natural sounds** (crying, random vocalisations, burping, wind-related sounds)
  - b. 2-5 months - **cooing and laughter**
  - c. 4 - 8 months - **experimentation**, stringing sounds together
  - d. 6 - 13 months - **babbling**  
Soon they will use intentional sounds to signal their needs.
1. "In general, the more responsive parents are to their babies' vocalisations, the larger babies' vocabularies are at 15 months."
2. It may take some time before the adult identifies an intentional word.



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## HOW DOES LANGUAGE DEVELOP?

### LINGUISTIC STAGE

1. Begins with the child's first intentional word.
2. **One Word Phase** (between **12 - 19 months**)
  - a. New words, one at a time.
  - b. May take 12 - 24 months for toddler to realise that everything has a name.
3. **Two Words phase** (between **20 - 30 months**)
4. **Three word phase** (between **28 and 42 months**)
  - a. Adding pronouns (e.g., 'me' ---- see below) and prepositions (e.g., 'on' floor, ('in' go' bath.)
  - b. *The variations between children during this period can be very wide.*
1. **Language Explosion** (around **30 months**)
  - a. Learning the structure and rules of language
  - b. Exciting time for the child
  - c. Building her self-esteem, self-concept and her feeling of becoming a member of her



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## TWO AREAS OF LANGUAGE

**When we learn about language development we break it down into two areas:**

1. Expressive Language
1. Receptive Language



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## EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

### Expressive Language is:

- Child's ability to express himself using the language of his social group
- Baby telling us what they need.

### Babies may signal their state of comfort, interests, attention and needs with:

- crying and other sounds,
- with body language

### There are many forms of expressive language that the baby might use.

- If the baby's signals are successful, they will continue to use, develop and improve their ability to communicate.
- By two, the toddler is using 50 plus words.

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## RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

### Receptive Language is the ability to listen and understand

- This happens much quicker than expressive language.

### From 7 months in utero, baby can hear sounds

- Preference for their Mother's voice.

### There are many signs that baby understands language in first year. For example:

- Turning head toward somebody talking
- Crawling to the door when it is time for the park

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## MULTILINGUAL HOMES

- Many children in community will hear more than 1 language. Some may be learning **3 languages!**
- Studies show this helps with **working memory**.
- Important that **child hears both languages** equally.
  - They are not confused by this!
- Children will begin using words of **both languages** in a sentence.
- The child will still **reach all milestones** at the same time.



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## SUPPORTING EARLY COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

The most important part of creating a rich language environment is the adult!



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## SUPPORTING EARLY COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

***Some strategies for supporting Early Communications skills:***

- Respect the child as an individual
- Be present
- Tune in to the child
- Engage in back-and-forth interactions
- Take turns
- Talk more
- Label the object of interest for the child
- Expansions
- Recasts
- Sing
- Read to children



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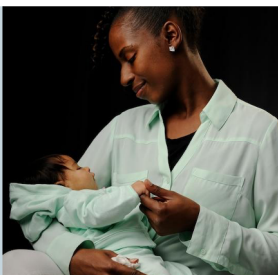
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## BIRTH TO 4 MONTHS

## LANGUAGE MILESTONES

- Communicates
  - sounds
  - body movements
  - facial expressions
- Cooing
- Able to wait their turn in back and forth interactions with adult
- Social smile



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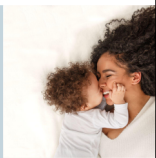
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#### 4 - 8 MONTHS LANGUAGE MILESTONES

- Begins to laugh
- Babbling develops
- Understand that their cries and sounds get a response from adult!
- Looks up when they hear their name
- Understands words for familiar objects or people
- Able to follow an adult's gaze (look at the same thing as the adult)




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#### 8 - 12 MONTHS LANGUAGE MILESTONES

- Joint attention is mastered
- Able to communicate with intention, e.g:
  - pointing at an object they want
  - nodding to say yes
  - waving to say goodbye.
- String together a variety of babbles together to sound like words
- Understands simple requests, for example; "Can Mummy have a cracker?"




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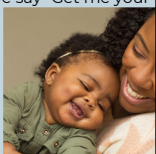
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#### 1 - 2 YEARS LANGUAGE MILESTONES

- First word is spoken
- Can point to familiar objects when asked
- Says "No" with meaning
- Repeats the last word in our sentence, for example; If we say "Get me your shoes" they will say "shoes"
- Uses own name when asked, "Who ate the banana?"
- Imitates sounds in the environment, for example; "Woof woof, beep beep etc"
- Uses 2 or 3 word sentences




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**1 - 2 YEARS****CONTINUED****LANGUAGE MILESTONES**

- Can name 3 common objects in books
- Understands when you are speaking about different rooms in a home, for example 'Your shoes are in your bedroom'
- Can identify more than 6 body parts
- Understands two-part sentences such as, 'First we will put your shoes on and then we will go to the park'
- Can follow a direction that includes 2 separate and distinct requests
- Answers a simple question with more than a yes or no!
- Uses 50+ words



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**2 - 3 YEARS****LANGUAGE MILESTONES**

- Uses two to three sentences
- Names eight common items in books
- Recites nursery rhymes and familiar songs
- Understands
  - all common verbs (such as "jump"),
  - most common adjectives (such as "big")
  - some prepositions (such as "in")



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**2 - 3 YEARS****CONTINUED****LANGUAGE MILESTONES**

- Child regularly engages in conversations, using short sentences to share their experiences
- Asks "what," "where," and "when" questions
- Can understand "how" and "when" questions
- Uses 300-1,000 words.



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**3 - 5 YEARS****LANGUAGE MILESTONES**

- Has an understanding of opposites
- Has an understanding of time concepts such as "before" and "after" or "yesterday" and "today"
- Can identify primary colours and shapes
- Able to respond to "What happens if . . ." questions.
- Asks "when," "why," and "how" questions
- Uses regular past tense, such as adding "-ed" to make "fix" "fixed"; and
- Uses irregular past-tense verbs correctly, such as "fell" or "broke"



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**3 - 5 YEARS****CONTINUED****LANGUAGE MILESTONES**

- Describes how to do something, such as play a simple game
- Can give a description of a past experience in sequence
- Able to produce simple rhyming words
- Can ask questions about how another person feels
- Answers questions about a story
- Able to produce longer, more complex, and grammatically correct sentences
- Uses relational words such as "first," "then," and "next."
- Understands approximately 13,000 words



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**TASKS**

Task 1 - Choose one of the following videos of a baby (pre-linguistic)

Task 2 - Choose one of the following videos of a young child (linguistic)

Task 3 - Use the Individual Child observation forms to observe each child's communication and language development.

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