

Speech and Language Skills

Your Child Needs to be Ready for School

Children who start school without the speech and language skills they need can have trouble participating, learning and having fun in Junior Kindergarten.

Check your child's development with the charts below.



3-year-olds should:

- Understand same/different, one/all, heavy/light, night/day
- Enjoy pretend play and playing with other children
- Be able to talk about something that happened in the past (e.g. trip to Grandma's)
- Say 4-7 words in a sentence "I want my red ball."
- Understand and ask "Who?" "What?" "Where?" and "Why?" questions
- Adults outside of the family should understand at least half of what the child says
- Be able to clearly make these sounds in words: p, b, m, n, h, w, d
- Errors on l, sh, ch, v, j, r, th and lisps are normal at this age.

4-year-olds should:

- Be able to follow three-step instructions; i.e., "Get your boots, put them on and go outside."
- Tell stories with a clear beginning, middle and end, and be able to anticipate what will happen next in a story
- Use adult-type grammar, e.g. "Sam dropped his cookie, so I gave him part of mine."
- Be able to start a conversation and keep it going on the same topic for three turns
- Answer "Who?" "How?" and "How many?" questions
- Be able to say the following sounds correctly in words: k, y, f, g, t, d
- Errors on l, sh, ch, v, j, r, th and lisps are normal at this age.

If your child is not meeting one or more of the milestones, contact Language Express now. Don't wait until your child starts school! It is never too early to refer.

Go to www.language-express.ca for more information, or call 1-888-503-8885. Language Express services are funded by the province and are free for families.

Language Express provides speech and language assessment and treatment services for children from birth to school entry in Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville.



Play & Participate

Children need to learn to follow routines and to behave as part of a group before they start school. They also need to learn to play cooperatively with other children and to respect the feelings and opinions of others.

- Arrange play dates with other children. Remind your child that, "We all like different things and that's okay!"
- Participate in playgroups, library story time programs, swimming lessons, gymnastics classes, nursery school, soccer or t-ball teams. Daycare is also a great option.
- Play games together as a family.
- Take your child lots of places (e.g. the grocery store, the library, community events, or the art gallery).



Limit TV, Computer & All Electronic Devices



Pediatricians recommend no TV or computer for children under 2, and no more than 1-2 hours of supervised daily screen time for older children.

- TV and electronic games can be entertaining, but *children will not learn the skills they need from screens*. Children's brains are wired to learn from playing and talking with real people.
- Turn off the TV and computer during meals, when visitors arrive, and whenever you are not actually using them. Don't use the TV as background noise.

Be A Good Model



Give clear examples, but don't tell your child what to say.

- Repeat what she says correctly. If she says, "My boon falled down!" you could say, "Your spoon fell down. Oops! Let's get a clean one." Don't tell her to say it again. If you say, "Don't say 'boon,' say 'spoon,'" you are telling her that there is something wrong with the way she talks.
- Talk to your child. Explain what you are doing. Name different things around you.
- Listen to your child. Encourage your child to describe things and to make up stories.

Take Turns

Join in and take turns with words and actions.

- Play turn-taking games and help your child to learn to play by the rules. Play games like Simon Says, What Time is it Mr. Wolf?, Red Light Green Light, and board games or card games.
- Take turns in daily routines (e.g. sweeping the floor, adding ingredients to a recipe).
- Take turns going down the slide or pushing each other on the swing.
- Take turns turning the pages and telling the story in a book.



Challenge Your Child

Introduce new words and model longer and more complicated sentences. Add new ideas to your conversations.

- When your child is getting dressed, if your child says, "I like green," you could say, "I like green too, but I prefer dark blue." When you do this, you are giving your child examples to learn from.

Don't just say "run;" say "skip," "tip-toe," "sprint." Don't just say "big," say "huge," "gigantic," or "enormous."

- When you read with your child, ask questions like, "What do you think will happen next?" "Why do you think she did that?" "I wonder ..." "How do you think he felt when ...?"

