

Speech and Language Development in Preschoolers

When to Refer

Head Start Training 8/2020

Domains of Speech and Language Development

- ▶ Receptive Language
 - ▶ What children are able to understand and how they process new information
- ▶ Expressive Language
 - ▶ How children are able to express themselves and share information
- ▶ Articulation
 - ▶ Speech sound development and overall intelligibility in spontaneous communication
- ▶ Pragmatics
 - ▶ Social skills
- ▶ Fluency
 - ▶ Stuttering vs. Normal Non-Fluency
- ▶ Voice Disorders

Focus for Today

Normal Receptive Language Development
Normal Expressive Language Development
Normal Articulation Development
Considerations for referrals

Receptive Language Development

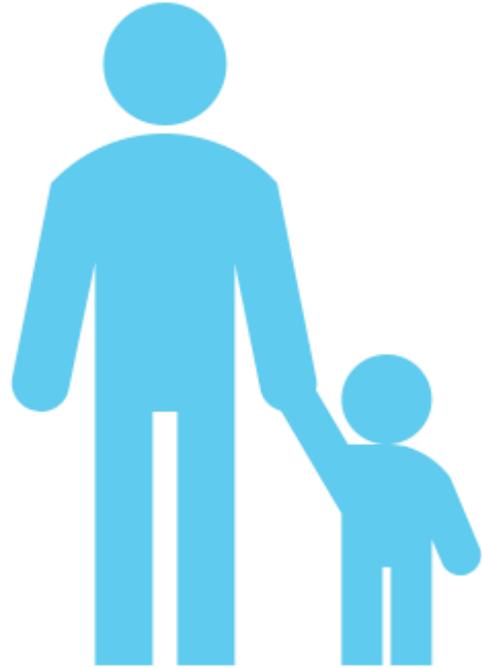
3-4 year olds

- ▶ Understands 1500-2000 words
- ▶ Can follow familiar 2 or more step directions, and directions in familiar routines
- ▶ Can tell or retell a simple story, but not necessarily in the right order or sequence
- ▶ To understand a sequence, they rely on word order. They may not have an understanding of before/after or first/then
- ▶ Can answer simple “how” questions
- ▶ Can describe object use
- ▶ Understands singular and plural verbs
- ▶ Has the vocabulary to understand analogies, and opposites

Receptive Language Development

4-5 year olds

- ▶ Understands up to 2000 words
- ▶ Can process longer sentences (up to 9 words in length)
- ▶ Can follow 3 step directions without context, object, or routine prompts
- ▶ Understands sequences and time such as before/after, first/then, tomorrow, next week
- ▶ Can retell a story or event with 5 sentences or steps from memory
- ▶ Can answer "how" and "why" questions
- ▶ Thinks about and comments on what others say
- ▶ Understands rhyming words
- ▶ Early emerging reading skills



When to Refer

Questions to ask classroom staff and parents
Observations

Receptive Language

- ▶ Can your student follow multi-step directions? Can they follow directions that are new and novel, versus those that are familiar and routine based?
- ▶ Can your student relate past events or retell an event or sequence? Can they retell in the correct order (for older kids)?
- ▶ Can your student answer simple questions?
- ▶ Can your student describe how to use an object?
- ▶ Does your student understand the difference between singular and plural nouns?

Expressive Language

3-4 year olds

- ▶ Uses 800-1500 words
- ▶ Sentence length is 4 to 5 words
- ▶ Asks many questions- *What? Who? Where? When? How? Why?*
- ▶ Asks yes/no questions
- ▶ Uses *some, all, many*
- ▶ Loves telling stories
- ▶ Remembers and recites songs and nursery rhymes

Expressive Language

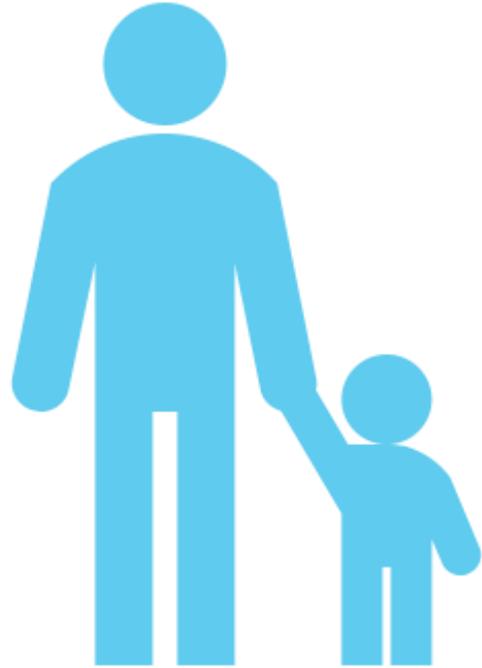
3-4 year olds

- ▶ Grammar Development
 - ▶ Uses plurals (cats)
 - ▶ Uses regular past tense (hopped)
 - ▶ Uses pronouns (I, you, me, we, she they)
 - ▶ Uses possessives (mommy's, his, hers, theirs)
 - ▶ Uses prepositions (on, in, under)
 - ▶ Uses articles (the, a)
 - ▶ Uses conjunctions or connecting words (and, so, because)
 - ▶ Uses descriptive concepts (tall, thin, big, little)
 - ▶ Uses present progressive verbs (is/am/are +ing verb)
 - ▶ Uses negative verbs (is not, am not, are not)

Expressive Language

4-5 year olds

- ▶ Uses 1500-2500 words
- ▶ Asks *whose* questions
- ▶ Uses complex emotion words (upset, confused)
- ▶ Starts to learn early writing skills
- ▶ Grammar
 - ▶ Uses conjunctions or connecting words (but, when, if, so, because)
 - ▶ Uses more descriptive concepts (funny, full)
 - ▶ Uses comparatives (big, bigger)
 - ▶ Uses pronouns (him, her)
 - ▶ Uses more complex sentence structures with irregular past tense (ran) and irregular plurals (feet)



When to Refer

Questions to ask classroom staff and parents
Observations

Expressive Language

- ▶ How many words does your student use to express themselves? How long are their sentences? Rule of thumb: 3 year olds uses 4+ words, 4 year olds use 5+ words, and 5 year olds use 6+ words.
- ▶ Does your student ask and answer questions?
- ▶ Does your student tell stories, or retell events?
- ▶ Does your student remember nursery rhymes or songs?
- ▶ Is it difficult to understand your student due to poor grammar skills?

Articulation Skills

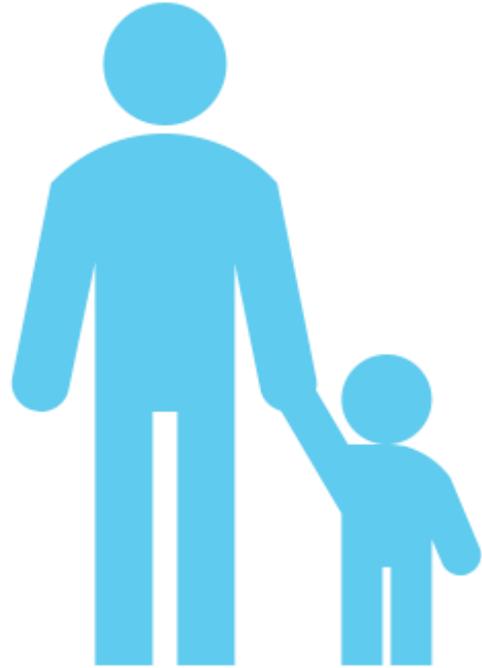
3-4 year olds

- ▶ Understood by most people outside the family most of the time (75-90% of the time)
- ▶ Produces most vowel sounds correctly (ee, oh, ay)
- ▶ Produces and uses many consonant sounds in words correctly- m, n, p, b, t, d, w, k, g, ng, h, f, s, y
- ▶ Produces some emerging speech sounds through this year- j, l, sh, ch, z, v
- ▶ Uses blends (2 sounds together) at the beginning and end of words- gl, nd
- ▶ Occasional hesitations or repetitions (this is referred to as normal non fluency)

Articulation Skills

4-5 year olds

- ▶ Understood 95-100% of the time by the time they are 5 years old
- ▶ Still may have some difficulty producing
 - ▶ /r/ 'wed' for 'red'
 - ▶ /l/ 'wong' for 'long'
 - ▶ /th/ 'fanks' for 'thanks'
 - ▶ Produces /th/ for /s/ (lisp)
 - ▶ Some blends are more difficult- /spr/ and /str/
- ▶ Uses normal rate, volume, rhythm, and intonation
- ▶ May delete some syllables in long, multisyllabic words such as 'elephant' and 'spaghetti'



When to Refer

Questions to ask classroom staff and parents
Observations

Articulation

- ▶ Is it difficult to understand your student due to the sounds they produce or don't produce?
- ▶ Does your student drool?
- ▶ Is your student a very messy eater?
- ▶ Does your student always seem to have their tongue between their teeth?