

# Is my Child's Communication on Track?

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS  
WONDERING, COMPARING, AND GOOGLING**



"Everyone else at childcare seems to be talking more..."



"My first child was saying so much more at this age..."



"Is this just their personality or should I be doing something?"



A FREE PARENT GUIDE FROM

All Adelaide  
Speech Pathology

COMMUNICATION CHANGES EVERYTHING

# What should I be actually looking at?



Communication is much more than the number of words a child can say. Speech pathologists look at the whole picture.

## Understanding Language

Do they understand familiar words, routines, questions, and everyday instructions appropriate for their age?

## Expressing Themselves

How do they communicate their wants, ideas, and experiences? Is it through gestures, sounds, words, or sentences?

## Social Communication

Do they seek others out, share enjoyment, show or bring you interesting things, take turns, and engage with people around them?

## Speech Clarity

How easily can familiar and unfamiliar people understand what they are trying to say?

## Play and Interaction

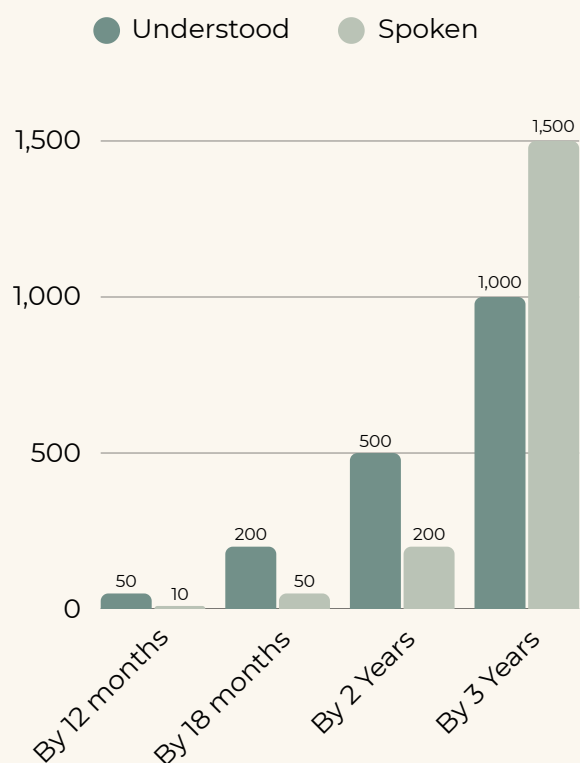
How are they using toys, imagination, and interaction with other people during play?

## Progress over time

Are they steadily gaining new skills, or does their development seem to have stalled or gone backwards?

### How many words should my child be saying?

Average number of words understood and spoken by age\*



Children's communication develops within a wide range. Some will be easier, some later, and both can be typical.

\*Source: Speech Pathology Australia (2018)

**One isolated skill rarely tells the whole story**

# Okay... but what if something IS going on?



Parents often start searching for an explanation long before they contact a speech pathologist. Terms such as speech delay, autism, Developmental Language Disorder, and dyslexia can quickly become overwhelming.



## **Speech or Language Delay**

Some children develop particular speech or language skills later than expected. An assessment can help identify which areas are developing well and which may benefit from support.



## **Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)**

DLD involves persistent difficulties learning, understanding and/or using spoken language that can affect everyday communication and learning. It is not something a parent can determine from a word count alone.



## **Autism**

Communication differences can be one part of a broader developmental profile involving social communication, interaction, interest, behaviour, and sensory experiences. late talking by itself does not tell us whether a child is autistic.



## **Later Literacy or Dyslexia Difficulties**

Some early speech and language difficulties are associated with a greater risk of later reading, spelling, or literacy challenges. This does not mean that a young child with delayed speech will develop dyslexia, but family history and a child's broader language development can help identify who may benefit from monitoring

**You do not need to work out which 'box' your child fits into before seekign for advice.**

# When is it worth asking a speech pathologist?



## WORTH ASKING ABOUT

- You are consistently concerned about your child's communication.
- Their communication does not seem to be progressing as you expected.
- They have difficulty understanding language or following everyday instructions.
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- They become frustrated because they cannot communicate what they want or mean.
- Their speech is particularly difficult to understand for their age.
- Childcare, preschool or another professional has raised concerns.
- You are noticing differences in social communication as well as talking.
- There is a family history of speech, language, literacy, or learning difficulties.
- Your child has lost communication or social skills they previously used.

## SOME POTENTIALLY REASSURING SIGNS

- They are steadily gaining new communication skills.
- They communicate effectively using a combination of words, sounds, facial expression, and gestures.
- They understand much of the language used with them.
- They initiate interactions and share interest or experiences with you.
- Your concerns mainly come from comparison with a particularly advanced sibling or peer.



**Reassuring signs do not replace individual assessment where concerns persist. Parents know their child best.**

## Let's help you get clarity

If you're still wondering, we're here to help you understand what you're seeing and whether assessment is a good next step.



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