



SPEECH SERVICES SYDNEY & COAST

# LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

As children grow and learn from the world around them, they develop language skills to help them both, **understand others** and to **say their thoughts and feelings**. They also develop the ability to judge what can and cannot be said in different situations.



## Receptive Language

The first to develop, receptive language is the ability to **listen to and understand speech**. This includes understanding sentences, following instructions, and understanding a story. Milestones include:

- 2-3 years: Follows 2-part instructions, knows main body parts, clothing, toys and food
- 3-4 years: Follows 3-part instructions, understands longer, more complex sentences
- 4-6 years: Follows the meaning of others' conversations, follows multi-step instructions
- 6-8 years: Shares ideas, can listen for a sustained period





### Expressive Language

Expressive language includes our ability to say **words, sentences, and stories**. It includes the words we use (vocabulary) and how we put those words together (grammar, length of sentence).

- 2-3 years: 2-3 words sentences, names actions
- 4-5 years: Asks many questions, creates longer sentences (5+ words), knows colours, shapes, categories
- 6-8 years: Uses sentences with details, sings entire songs



### Pragmatic Language

Pragmatic language refers to the **social language skills** we use in our everyday interactions. This includes what we say and how we say it, including the following milestones:

- 3-4 years: Turn-takes with other children, talks about feelings
- 4-5 years: Plays with other children with same aims, imaginative play
- 5-8 years: Uses language for jokes or teasing, reports on past events, negotiates during play, makes up own games with rules



### WHEN TO REFER

If you have concerns about how well your child can understand or share ideas with you, contact a Speech Pathologist.