

# Don't Play Wait and See

## Milestones for Speech and Language Development • 3 to 5 years

### By age 3 does your child...

- | YES                      | NO                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Understand “who”, “what”, “where” and “why” questions                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Create long sentences, using 5 to 8 words                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Talk about past events (i.e. trip to grandparents’ house, day at childcare) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tell simple stories   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Show affection for favourite playmates                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Engage in multi-step pretend play (i.e. cooking a meal, repairing a car)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is understood by most people outside of the family, most of the time        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is aware of the function of print (i.e. in menus, lists, signs)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have a beginning interest in, and awareness of rhyming                      |

### Warning Signs:

- stuttering which lasts longer than three months (struggle and tension while speaking)
- rarely makes eye contact
- difficulty playing with others



### By age 4 does your child...

- | YES                      | NO                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Follow directions involving three or more steps (i.e. “First get some paper, then draw a picture, and then give it to mom”) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use adult-type grammar  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tell stories with a clear beginning, middle and end   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Talk to try to solve problems with adults and other children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Demonstrate increasingly complex imaginative play   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is understood by strangers almost all of the time   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is able to generate simple rhymes (i.e. “cat-bat”)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Match some letters with their sounds (i.e. “letter T says ‘tuh’)  |

### Warning Signs:

- other people have a hard time understanding what your child says
- gets frustrated when others cannot understand his speech



## By 5 years does your child...

YES NO

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Follow group directions<br>(i.e. "all the boys get a toy")   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Understand directions involving "if...then"<br>(i.e. "If you're wearing runners, then line<br>up for gym") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Describe past, present and future events<br>in detail  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seek to please his/her friends   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Show increasing independence in friendships<br>(i.e. may visit neighbour by him/herself)                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use almost all of the sounds of their language<br>with few to no errors                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Know all the letters of the alphabet   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Identify the sounds at the beginning of some<br>words (i.e. "pop starts with the 'puh' sound")             |

### Warning Signs:

- does not use complete sentences
- has trouble following directions



**Communication**  **Counts**  
Your District Preschool Speech & Language Program

**If your child does not meet these milestones,  
call your local health unit for more information:**

Northumberland County, Haliburton County,  
and City of Kawartha Lakes  
**1-866-888-4577**

Peterborough County and City  
**(705) 743-1000**

[www.kidtalk.on.ca](http://www.kidtalk.on.ca)

*Adapted from material from Alberta Health*