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Red Flags in Communication Development

Parents often ask about warning signs of speech and/or language problems. This list provides some warning signs that parents can refer to when observing their children's speech and language skills.

At age	Red Flags
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not laugh and squeal does not look toward new sounds
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has limited or no babbling does not indicate when happy or upset
12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not point to objects does not use gestures such as waving or shaking head
15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has not used first word does not respond to "no" and "bye-bye"
18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not use at least six to ten words consistently does not hear well or discriminate between sounds
20 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not use at least six consonant sounds does not follow simple directions
24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has a vocabulary of less than 50 words has decreased interest in social interactions
36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strangers have difficulty understanding what the child is saying does not use simple sentences

Other Concerns

- Is a very picky eater (willing to eat only four or five foods, gags on certain textures)
- Has difficulty with transitions
- Uses repetitive and/or perseverative behaviors
- Shows no interest in communicating
- Drools excessively
- Stutters more consistently and for longer than six months

We'd like to thank the following sources from which we obtained information for this section: BabyCenter (http://www.babycenter.com/0_warning-signs-of-a-language-communication-developmental-dela_6734.bc); Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital (www.braintreerehabhospital.com/pdf/speech-and-language-milestones.pdf); and KidTalk, Inc. (www.kidtalk.org/milestones.html). For more information, please see the full References, Websites, & Resources list on pages 22-24.