

# PREVENTION: DEVELOPING LANGUAGE

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

ADVICE TO PARENTS: What you can do to help  
SEEK HELP : When to ask for advice or help from a  
speech and language therapist

### from birth to 6 months

- Your baby reacts to sounds, turns eyes and/or head towards source of sound.
- Produces sounds



### by 12 months

- understands simple instructions,
- says "mummy" and "daddy",
- responds to his name

- Talk to him in a calm and warm manner
- Sing and laugh along with him
- Talk about and explain the sounds he hears
- Name familiar people and things in his life
- Tell him what you are doing



- Play with your voice , your baby loves it: the melody of speech helps him understand and use language more effectively
- Help your baby discover the pleasure of communication: encourage all types of reciprocal interaction - making faces, smiles, laughter, looking

- Observe if your baby is reacting to sounds - if not, have his hearing checked
- Seek help if your baby does not make eye contact as basis for communication



- At this stage TV has little value for a child Do not leave him in front of it for long periods It does not promote real communication!

### by 18 months

- Understands simple instructions and sentences
- Should be naming familiar objects
- Vocabulary is increasing



### by 2 years

- Understands more complex instructions
- Says his name
- Uses 2-3 word sentences

- Talk to him as you usually do, using simple words and grammatical sentences - not baby talk
- Give him sturdy books and talk about them
- Colours and shapes interest him



- Enrich his vocabulary
- Explain the words he does not understand
- Repeat the words he does not pronounce but do not ask him to repeat it correctly on every occasion

Seek help

- if your child stops speaking
- if his speech does not continue to develop
- shows signs of deterioration



Seek help

- if he has only a few words
- if his speech is very unintelligible
- if he does not put 2 words together to form short phrases

### by 3 years

- Understands simple sentences
- Uses questions
- Asks questions
- Uses some plurals and prepositions



### by 4 years

- Your child's speech is more like an adult's in terms of grammar

- Teach your child how to tell stories; help him clarify his thoughts and feelings
- Encourage him to stop using a feeding bottle and/or dummy, if he still does



- Read stories together, take turns in telling them; this way you encourage a positive attitude to language and reading
- Children need the example you set - let them see you read

Seek help

- if his speech remains unintelligible
- if he uses only a few verbs but no articles/adjectives
- if he does not use the plural form
- if he does not form simple sentences



Seek help

- if he finds it difficult to begin a sentence or repeats syllables or words
- if he uses short, unstructured sentences
- if his speech is not always intelligible
- if he cannot relate simple and recent events