



## **KJARTAN D. ARMANN, M.D.**

Infant, Child and Adolescent Medicine

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## **Speech and Language Delays in Young Children**

As your child grows from an infant to a toddler to an older child, there are many ways in which he or she develops. These include physical, cognitive, and speech development.

Every child develops at different rates and some children develop in certain areas faster than others. Speech and language are the most common areas of development that can be delayed. About 20% of children learn to talk or use words later than other children their age.



### **How Can I Tell If My Child Has a Speech or Language Delay:**

While every child develops in his or her own unique way, there are speech and language milestones that most children will reach at certain ages. Your pediatrician will talk with you about these milestones during well-child checkups. Examples of these milestones for speech and language are:

- By 1 year of age, most babies will:
  - Wave goodbye.
  - Say “dada” and “mama.”
- Between 1 and 2 years of age, most toddlers will:
  - Name a few common objects and pictures when asked.
  - Point to a few body parts when asked.
- By 2 years of age, most toddlers will:
  - Say several 2-word phrases, such as “all gone” or “Mommy go.”
  - Be able to follow a 1-step command, such as “put your cup on the table.”



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If your child is delayed in several areas, this may be a sign of speech or language delay. Sometimes a related concern will be that children will show behavior problems, such as temper tantrums, because they are frustrated when they cannot express what they need or want. If your pediatrician suspects there may be a speech or language delay, your pediatrician may ask additional questions, order a hearing test, or refer your child for additional evaluation.

### **What Causes Speech or Language Delay:**

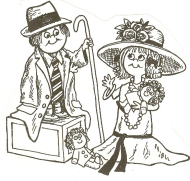
Simple speech delays are sometimes temporary. They may go away on their own or with some extra help. Families can encourage their child to talk using gestures or sounds and spend extra time playing, reading, and talking with their child.

In some cases, your child may need more help from someone outside the family, such as a speech and language therapist. These trained professionals can help work with children to develop or improve their speech patterns.

In some cases, delays in speech may be a sign of a more serious problem, such as hearing loss, learning problems, developmental delays in other areas, or autism spectrum disorder.

### **How Can I Help My Baby To Develop Speech and Language:**

Your baby begins to communicate with you long before he or she can talk by crying, smiling, or responding to you. It is never too early to talk with your baby, sing to your baby, and read to your baby. The best way for babies to learn to communicate is by face-to-face communication with others.



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