

SPEECH & LANGUAGE CHECKLIST

EARLY GESTURES



Communication Milestones You'll **SEE** Before You **HEAR** Their First Words



EVERYDAY ROUTINES

Does your child...

- ☐ Reach hands up to get picked up
- ☐ Point to a picture in a book
- ☐ Point at bottle, cup, or reach towards mama for breastfeeding
- ☐ Smack lips or make munching motion for eating
- ☐ Pat you or an object to get your attention or draw your attention to the object



SOCIAL PLAY

Does your child...

- ☐ Wave Hi/Bye
- ☐ Blow kisses
- ☐ Clap
- ☐ Reach hand/fingers up towards a *High Five* or *Fist Bump*
- ☐ Initiate play by covering face for peek-a-boo or hand you a toy



EARLY CONVERSATIONS

Does your child...

- ☐ Nod/Shake head for Yes & No
- ☐ Shrug shoulders and put hands up for "Where?" or "I don't know"
- ☐ Point at things around house or outside and looks up at you
- ☐ Use a finger for "Shhhh"
- ☐ Use motions (dance/bounce) to show he wants something (like music)

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN ENCOURAGE GESTURES



Point to things you see or hold up objects with your child

Children consistently pointing or showing an object are more likely to learn the word for that object within the next few months



Encourage more face to face opportunities so you can better respond to each others facial expressions & gestures

Acknowledge your child by copying them and saying the word that matches the gesture, facial expression, or body movement



Say the word along with the gesture

Gestures that show the shape/function of an object are also helpful for little's communicating their wants. For example, holding your hands in the shape of a ball while you say "ball" OR modeling a throwing/bouncing ball action while you say "ball"



There's no perfect time of day or recommended duration

Focus on connection, whether it's a fun day at the park or quiet time before nap. It shouldn't feel like a chore or lesson- Stop, rest, hydrate, and recharge whenever you both need it

A VISUAL REMINDER

Whenever you think about it and wherever you are, you can help them build neural pathways by talking and using gestures throughout your day



☐ **Wake-Up time-** picking up your baby or toddler out of the crib or bed

☐ Diaper changes

☐ **Meal times -** breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks

☐ Preparing meals or cleaning your home

☐ **Bedtime:** bath, bedtime stories, and cuddle time

QUESTIONS & NOTES

Discussing your concerns early with a speech-language pathologist can prevent potential difficulties later with behavior, reading, and maintaining friendships with peers



ENCOURAGING REMINDERS



You're already doing an awesome job! This checklist helps you notice and encourage more communication opportunities while you and your little one spend time with your family and friends



You are doing your best, and that is enough. I'm here for you if you need support

NURTURING SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THROUGH PLAY

Want simple play ideas and to learn more about how to encourage communication from baby's early months to Kindergarten?

