



ASK THE EXPERT!

“My toddler isn’t talking very much. Should I get him tested now, or should I wait?”

Although children develop at their own rate, in general, the stages of development tend to follow a similar progression. Parents with a child who is not speaking as much as a peer, a sibling or other young family member may experience anxiety about whether there is “something wrong”. In these cases, parents wonder if they should pursue an evaluation—or should they adopt a “wait and see” approach.

While it is true that young children develop at different rates, there are some expected behaviors at specific ages that define typical expressive language development. A typical 24 month old is able to say well over 50 words and uses mostly single words and two-word combinations to communicate. However, their speech may be difficult to understand. Here are some risk factors that may suggest a 24 month old child’s speech/language development may not “catch up” with only the gift of time and an evaluation may be warranted:

1. The child is using gestures rather than words to communicate.
2. The child uses few different speech sounds.
3. The child is not using at least 30 words consistently.
4. The child is not combining at least 2 words together (e.g. “more milk”, “my car”, etc.
5. The child appears very frustrated by difficulty with communication and may tantrum or act out with seemingly little reason.

(If, at any time, your toddler does not seem to understand basic directions, routines or know the name of common house hold items; or your child does not seem to be trying to get your attention or communicate with you very often; or you’ve noticed a regression in language development (i.e. stops talking, begins to echo phrases heard frequently), an evaluation should be pursued.)

While some children with slow expressive language development do catch up on their own, a wait and see approach may result in a child falling further behind if his speech and

language is developing slowly during an age range when other children are rapidly progressing (e.g., 24-30 months). If you have concerns about slow expressive language development in a child, early action may lessen your fears and provide solid information about the individual's development. An evaluation by a speech language pathologist (SLP) can give insight as to whether the child may require direct speech therapy, or if there are some signs of positive growth that warrant a cautious "wait and see" with a re-evaluation to monitor progress. SLPs can also counsel parents and teach techniques to stimulate speech and language development in their child.

If you have concerns- seek solid information. Evaluations for children age birth to three are provided at no cost to the family. For referral sources in your county, call 1-800-522-5006.

For further information call:

Dr. Noreen Boje, Ed.D, CCC-SLP at 271-0680, ext. 1873

Director of Speech Language Operations

Locations:

Rochester/Brighton Center- 1000 Elmwood Ave, Rochester, New York 14620

Greece Center- 3199 Ridge Road W. Rochester, New York 14626

Webster Center- 1170 Ridge Road, Webster, New York 14580