

18-Month-Old Speech Milestones Checklist

Expectations

Expressive (talking)

- Uses 10-50 words
- Use gestures like pointing or waving
- Imitate words/sounds (coping animal sounds)
- Starts combining words (e.g., "more eat")
- Uses 4-6 specific sounds (p, b, m, h, w, d, n)
- Familiar people (mama), objects (ball)
- Word approximation: "buh" for "ball"

Receptive (understanding)

- Rapid increase in understanding language
- Follow one-step directions (e.g., "bring me the ball")
- Points to pictures in books
- Responds to their own name

When to Take Action

Expressive (talking)

- Vocabulary under 5-10 words
- No new words being added
- Does not imitate sounds or actions
- Not using word approximations consistently ("buh" is always used for "ball")

Receptive (understanding)

- Difficulty follow simple, one-step directions
- Doesn't respond to their name
- Limited gestures (e.g., not pointing or waving)



Additional Info

*Your child may not hit all of the above expected milestones by 18 months old, and that's okay! Below are some additional red flags related to their communication milestones. If you are feeling concerned about your child's development, reach out to your pediatrician about a referral to see a speech-language pathologist (SLP). Trust your gut!

- Regression in speech or language skills (losing words or skills they had).
- Limited social interaction (e.g., poor eye contact, disinterest in communication).
- Not attempting to communicate needs or engage in back-and-forth interactions.

