TALKING AND LISTENING

What should I expect?

Many parents want to know if their child's language and listening skills are developing normally. Children are individuals and develop at different rates but there is a general pattern to the way children develop language. These points can give you an idea of what to expect from your child.

By the age of **three**, your child should be able to:

- understand how objects are used - a crayon is something to draw with
- recognise their own needs, such as hunger
- follow directions
- use three to four word sentences
- enjoy telling stories and asking questions
- be understood by familiar adults

By the age of **four**, your child should be able to:

- understand shape and colour names
- understand some "time" words, such as lunch time, today, winter
- ask who, what and why questions
- use lots of words, usually in four to five word sentences
- use language when playing with other children
- speak clearly enough to be understood by most people

By the age of **five**, your child should be able to:

- understand opposites, such as high and low, wet and dry, big and little
- use sentences of about six words with correct grammar
- talk about events which are happening, have happened or might happen
- explain why something happens, such as "Mum’s car stopped because the petrol ran out"
- follow three directions, for example, "Stand up, get you shoes on and wait by the door"
- become interested in writing, numbers and reading things
- speak clearly enough to be understood by anyone

(These points are taken from Speech Pathology Australia’s Fact Sheet 2.2)
What to do if you have concerns?

If you are worried about your child’s speech or language development, contact a speech pathologist directly. If you, your relatives or your child’s pre-school teachers are concerned, it is worth contacting a speech pathologist before your child starts school. The waiting lists at local Community Health Services are often very long however, pre-school children are often prioritised.

A speech pathologist works with very young children so it is never too early to refer your child. In fact, the earlier you refer your child, the better. Young children develop speech and language very quickly.

Helpful Links:

Merrylands Community Health

Speech Pathology Australia Website – Find a Private therapist