

Checklist for Language Development

What to listen for in language

- (i) The child is not engaging in vocal play by one year.
- (ii) The child has no words by 18 months.
- (iii) The child has no two word phrases by two years e.g. “dog gone”.
- (iv) After the age of three there are no sentences or the child is predominantly echoing what is said to him/her.
- (v) Sentence structure is noticeably faulty after age four and/or babytalk persists e. g. “him is riding him’s bike”, “me drewed a picture”, “the cat caught the mouses”.

What to listen for in articulation

- (i) The child uses mostly vowel sounds or is unintelligible in his/her speech after 30 months.
- (ii) Sounds are more than a year late in appearing on this developmental sequence:

18 months - p, b, m, h, w

30 months - t, d, n, k, g, gn

3 years - y, f, s

4 years - sh, z, v

5 years - ch, j, l

by 7 years - th, r

- (iii) There are many omissions or substitutions of consonants after age three.
- (iv) There are many distorted consonants after age four.

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What to listen for in rhythm

- (i) The child is noticeably non-fluent after age 42 months. Earlier if you are particularly concerned or the child is tense or otherwise indicating awareness of and concern about the problem.
- (ii) There is an abnormal rhythm, rate or inflection (an unusual emphasis of sounds) after age five.

What to listen for in voice and resonance

- (i) There is noticeable hypernasality (presence of strong nasal quality) or lack of nasal resonance (sounds like the child has a bad cold).
- (ii) The voice is one of the following: a monotone, extremely loud, largely inaudible or dysphonic (hoarse or husky).
- (iii) The pitch is not appropriate to the child’s age and sex.

A final word

While it is important to be aware of problems that may occur in twins, remember that not all twins have problems. Be on the lookout for any speech or language problems, but do not become overconcerned with the issue and read too much into any misarticulation or other error. However if you feel sure there is some possible problem, do not be dissuaded from getting assessment and help.