

GUIDELINES FOR REFERRAL TO A SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

By knowing what to look for, doctors can recognize deviations from normal communication development that indicate a preschool-age child should be referred for speech-language assessment and possible treatment.

DO REFER The 3 to 6-month old baby who:

- does not babble nor laugh out loud
- does not respond to the sound of his mother's voice
- does not turn his head in the direction of noise

DO REFER The 12-month old baby who:

- does not imitate sounds made by adults nor use jargon
- does not have some understanding of words, (e.g., "Come here", "Don't touch", "Where's daddy?")
- does not recognize his name or familiar sounds, (e.g. telephone ringing)

DO REFER The 18-month old baby who:

- does not understand a few body parts, (e.g. "Show me your eyes")
- does not use a few real words yet

DO REFER The 2-year old child who:

- is not using single words & combining 2 or 3 words together
- is not able to point to common objects as they are named, nor obey simple verbal commands, (e.g. "Bring me the ball")
- does not interact with nor have any interest in people

DO REFER The 3-year old child who:

- does not speak in long phrases and some complete sentences
- does not understand some action and position words, ("What are you wearing?", "Put the ball under the desk.")

DO REFER The 4 to 5-year old child who:

- does not try to tell a story about an event in his life
- cannot follow 2 and 3-step commands, (e.g. "Find the doll and put it in the chair.")
- does not use complete, adult-like sentences

DO REFER A child at any age if:

- parents are worried about their child's speech or language
- a child stutters
- a child has chronic middle ear problems and exhibits poor pronunciation skills, or delayed language development
- a child's speech cannot be understood
- a child who was babbling or talking, stops and becomes silent

** adapted from "Guidelines for Referral to a Speech-Language Pathologist", The Speech Foundation of Ontario, Toronto Children's Centre, September '92*