

My Child's Stage of Communication Development

To learn more about your child's communication, complete the following checklist. As you read the statements, put an *A*, *O*, *R* or *N* next to each one to show how well it describes your child.

A = Always

O = Often

R = Rarely

N = Never

Sometimes a child's ability to **understand** language is more developed than his ability to **express** himself. So it's possible that your child may be at one stage for expression and a more advanced stage for understanding.

Discoverer	Understanding*	Expression
	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> looks at me when I talk or sing softly to him. <input type="checkbox"/> smiles when I smile at him or talk to him. <input type="checkbox"/> recognizes familiar voices. <input type="checkbox"/> turns his head toward sounds he hears. <input type="checkbox"/> responds when I call his name by looking at me, moving his body or holding still. <input type="checkbox"/> recognizes a few gestures (such as gestures for <i>up</i> or <i>no</i>). <input type="checkbox"/> anticipates the next step in daily routines. <p><i>* Discoverers don't yet understand what words mean.</i></p>	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> cries or fusses when he is sleepy, hungry or uncomfortable. <input type="checkbox"/> has different cries, depending on what he needs. <input type="checkbox"/> makes sounds when he is spoken to or smiled at. <input type="checkbox"/> makes vowel sounds like "ah," "uh" and "eh." <input type="checkbox"/> makes consonant sounds like "buh," "guh" or "ma." <input type="checkbox"/> imitates some sounds he hears. <input type="checkbox"/> imitates me back when I imitate a sound that he makes. <input type="checkbox"/> imitates simple actions, for instance banging on the tray of his high chair. <input type="checkbox"/> babbles, repeating sounds like "ba-ba-ba" or "nuh-nuh-nuh." <input type="checkbox"/> closes his eyes or turns away when he doesn't want something. <input type="checkbox"/> looks at, reaches for or moves toward objects or people he's interested in.

Communicator	<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Expression</i>
	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ understands familiar words in routine situations, like <i>bye-bye</i> or <i>up</i>. ___ understands names of familiar objects, like <i>bottle</i>, <i>light</i> or <i>cookie</i>. ___ responds to simple questions like “Where’s your teddy bear?” by moving to the object, looking at it or pointing to it. ___ can follow simple directions accompanied by gestures (such as when you wave and say, “Wave bye-bye”). ___ understands the meaning of <i>no</i>. 	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ takes me by the hand and pulls me toward objects that he wants. ___ draws my attention to objects and people by giving or showing them to me or pointing to them. ___ imitates actions such as clapping. ___ imitates sounds. ___ uses a few gestures, such as shaking his head for no or waving goodbye. ___ looks at or points to what he wants or is interested in, and then looks at me. ___ makes sounds that resemble words. ___ puts strings of sounds together that almost sound like speech (called “jargon”).
First Words User	<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Expression</i>
	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ can point to familiar body parts and objects. ___ follows simple instructions even without gestures (such as “Kiss the baby”). ___ can answer yes-or-no questions, such as “Do you want a banana?” ___ responds to questions like “Where’s the cup?” ___ understands the names of many familiar objects, people and animals. 	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ uses at least three words (or signs, or points to pictures) to communicate. ___ uses more gestures or sounds than he used to. ___ imitates sounds (like those animals make) and words. ___ uses between 10 and 25 words or signs. ___ points to 10 or more pictures to send messages. ___ uses 25 to 50 words or signs.

Combiner	<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Expression</i>
	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ can answer questions like "What do you wear on your feet?" ___ understands questions that start with <i>who</i>, such as "Who is at the door?" ___ understands the meaning of the following concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ <i>in</i>, ___ <i>on</i>, ___ <i>under</i>, ___ <i>big</i>, ___ <i>little</i>. ___ can sort objects by category, such as animals and toys. ___ listens to simple stories. 	<p>MY CHILD ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ___ combines two words or signs together, as in "Want juice" or "No bed." ___ uses at least 50 words. ___ asks questions using a rising tone (as in "Mommy sleepy?"). ___ asks questions that start with <i>what</i> and <i>where</i>, like "What's that?" ___ combines three words together, as in "Want more juice" or "Me no hat." ___ refers to himself by his name.

Discoverer, Communicator, First Words User or Combiner?

Look for the highest stage under "Understanding" where you wrote down an *A* or an *O* for *at least three statements*. This is your child's stage of communication development for **understanding**.

Now look for the highest stage under "Expression" in which you marked an *A* or an *O* for the *first* statement in that list. This is your child's stage of communication development for **expression**.

As you read this book, you'll come across strategies that apply to a particular stage of communication development. **Usually, the stage to keep in mind will be your child's stage of expression.** In some later chapters, however, you'll be asked to select strategies according to your child's stage of understanding.