



Holiday Gift Ideas for Speech and Language Development

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SPEECH AND HEARING
Your Preferred Communication Experts



The holiday season is the perfect time to choose gifts that not only delight your child but support their growth and development. As speech pathologists, we often recommend toys that encourage communication, creativity, and connection. Play is one of the most natural and effective ways for children to develop speech and language skills, and the right toys can provide endless opportunities for learning while having fun.

In this guide, you'll find a curated list of toys that promote speech and language development through imaginative play, turn-taking, vocabulary building, problem-solving, and storytelling. These toys have been selected with the infant, toddler, and early elementary-age child in mind. They are designed to foster key skills like listening, following directions, and expressing thoughts and ideas.

Let's make this holiday season a time of joy and meaningful growth for your little ones!



Spinning Stacking Toy

Can be used to target expressive language skills and expand utterances.

Ex. “put on”, “go fast”, “more please”, “go down”.



Balloon Launcher

Can be used to target expressive and receptive language skills
-“Ready, set, go” providing pauses to encourage sentence completion

-Spatial concepts “on-top”, “in”, “above your head”, “across the floor”



Piggy Bank

Can be used to target expressive and receptive language skills.

Ex. labeling colors and numbers, “put in”, “go down”, “take out”, “open up”.



Poke-A-Dot Book

Work on joint attention and engagement skills for shared book reading. Increased interest by incorporating fine motor skills (ex. popping bubbles)



Shark Bite Game

Can be used to target articulation and promote turn-taking. Word shapes: consonant vowel consonant (CVC) (ex. “put”, “bit”, “take”), consonant vowel (CV) (ex. “no”), vowel consonant (VC) (ex. “in”, “out”)



Critter Clinic

Can be used to target labeling and requesting.

- Labeling animals, objects, etc. hidden behind doors
- Requesting “help” to open doors with keys



Surprise Gems

It can be used to target requesting, expressive and receptive language skills.

- Examples: “Open please” or “help me”
- Labeling colors



Sensory Bubble Fish Tube

Great for sensory integration for regulation and getting your child in the mindset to learn. Can be used to target expressive language via requesting (ex. “I want red”), labeling (ex. “I see a yellow fish”), and commenting (ex. “there’s so many!” and “they’re going up and down”)



Surprise Presents

Can be used to target the phonological process of consonant cluster reduction (ex. “tuk” for “truck”), expressive language, and pronouns.

- Consonant clusters: two or more consonants in a word without a vowel (ex., “small”)
- “Whose present is it?” using dolls targeting “his” or “hers”



As your child grows, speech and language milestones offer valuable insight into their development.

Understanding what's typical—and when to seek guidance—can empower you to support their communication journey effectively.

Speech and Language Milestones

Infants (Birth to 3 months)

- Alters to sound.
- Quiets or smiles when you talk.
- Makes sounds back and forth with you.
- Makes sounds that differ depending on whether they are happy or upset.
- Coos, makes sounds like oooo, ahhh, and mmmm.
- Recognizes loved ones and some common objects.
- Turns or looks toward voices or people talking.



Speech and Language Milestones

Infants (4 to 6 months)

- Giggles and laughs.
- Responds to facial expressions.
- Looks at objects of interest and follows objects with their eyes.
- Reacts to toys that make sounds, like those with bells and music.
- Vocalizes during play or with objects in mouth.
- Vocalizes different vowel sounds - sometimes combined with a consonant - like uuuuummm, aaaagoo, or daaaa.
- Blows raspberries.



Speech and Language Milestones

Infants (7 to 9 months)

- Looks at you when you call their name.
- Stops for a moment when you say, “No.”
- Babbles long strings of sounds, like mamamama, upup, or bababa.
- Looks for loved ones when upset.
- Raises arms to be picked up.
- Recognizes the names of some people and objects.
- Pushes away unwanted objects.



Speech and Language Milestones

Infants (10 to 12 months)

- By age 10 months, reaches for objects.
- Points, waves, and shows or gives objects.
- Imitates and initiates gestures for engaging in social interactions and playing games, like blowing kisses or playing peek-a-boo.
- Tries to copy sounds that you make.
- Enjoys dancing.
- Responds to simple words and phrases like “Go bye-bye” and “Look at Mommy.”



Speech and Language Milestones

Toddlers (13 to 18 months)

- Looks around when asked “where” questions - like “Where’s your blanket?”
- Follows directions - like “Give me the ball,” “Hug the teddy bear,” “Come here,” or “Show me your nose.”
- Points to make requests, to comment or to get information.
- Shakes head for “no” and nods head for “yes.”
- Understands and uses words for common objects, some actions and people in their lives.
- Identifies one or more body parts.
- Uses gestures when excited, like clapping or giving a high-five, or when being silly, like sticking out their tongue or making funny faces.
- Uses a combination of long strings of sounds, syllables, and real words with speech-like inflection.



Speech and Language Milestones

Toddlers (19 to 24 months)

- Uses and understands at least 50 different words for food, toys, animals and body parts. Speech may not always be clear - like du for “shoe” or dah for “dog.”
- Puts two or more words together - like more water or go outside.
- Follows two-step directions - like “Get the spoon, and put it on the table.”
- Uses words like me, mine and you.
- Uses words to ask for help.
- Uses possessives, like Daddy’s sock.



Speech and Language Milestones

Toddlers (2 to 3 years)

- Uses word combinations often but may occasionally repeat some words or phrases, like baby - baby - baby sit down or I want - I want juice.
- Tries to get your attention by saying, Look at me!
- Says their name when asked.
- Uses some plural words like birds or toys.
- Uses -ing verbs like eating or running. Adds -ed to the end of words to talk about past actions, like looked or played.
- Gives reasons for things and events, like saying that they need a coat when it's cold outside.
- Asks why and how.
- Answers questions like "What do you do when you are sleepy?" or "Which one can you wear?"
- Correctly produces p, b, m, h, w, d, n in words.
- Correctly produces most vowels in words.
- Speech is becoming clearer but may not be understandable to unfamiliar listeners or to people who do not know your child.

Speech and Language Milestones

Children (4 to 5 years)

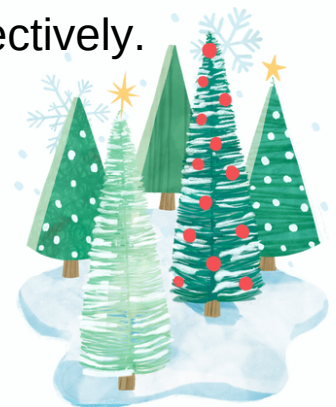
- Produces grammatically correct sentences. Sentences are longer and more complex.
- Includes (1) main characters, settings, and words like and to connect information and (2) ideas to tell stories.
- Uses at least one irregular plural form, like feet and men.
- Understands and uses location words, like behind, beside and between.
- Uses more words for time - like yesterday and tomorrow - correctly.
- Follows simple directions and rules to play games.
- Locates the front of the book and its title.
- Recognizes and names 10 or more letters and can usually write their own name.
- Imitates reading and writing from left to right.
- Blends word parts, like cup + cake = cupcake. Identifies some rhyming words, like cat and hat.
- Produces most consonants correctly, and speech is understandable in conversation.

Red Flags for Speech or Language Delays

While every child develops at their own pace, the following may indicate the need for a professional evaluation:

- Lack of babbling or cooing by 6 months.
- Limited or no response to sounds or name by 12 months.
- Absence of first words by 12 months.
- Difficulty imitating sounds or gestures.
- Limited vocabulary for their age.
- Unintelligible speech by age 3.
- Difficulty answering simple questions or following simple directions.

If you notice any of these concerns, it's important to take action early. Speech and language therapy can make a world of difference in helping your child communicate effectively.



Schedule an Appointment

Early identification and treatment are the keys!

At ***Premiere Speech and Hearing***, we specialize in assessing and supporting speech and language development in children. In addition, we provide critical parent education to enable you to continue working with your child at home.

If you're concerned about your child's progress or simply want a professional opinion, contact us today to schedule an evaluation.

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