

# 4 to 5 Years

## COMMUNICATION MILESTONES

These communication milestones cover hearing, speech, and language development in children.



Each child develops uniquely, even within the same family, and may meet certain milestones earlier or later than others. If your child does not meet many of the milestones within their age range, visit [www.asha.org/profind](http://www.asha.org/profind) to find an ASHA-certified audiologist or speech-language pathologist (SLP) for an assessment.

### What should my child be able to do?

- 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** or **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 a 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.

### What can I do to help?

- **Talk about where things are in space**, using words like **“first and last”** or **“right and left.”** Talk about opposites, like **“up and down”** or **“big and little.”**
- **Talk about categories, like fruits, furniture, or shapes.** Sort items by category. Have your child tell you which item does not belong. Talk about why it doesn't belong.

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## What can I do to help?

- **Pay attention when your child speaks.** Respond, praise, and encourage them when they talk. Get their attention before you speak. Pause after speaking, and let them respond to what you said.
- **Keep teaching your child new words.** Define words, and help your child understand them. For example, say, **“We are having fruit for a snack. This is an apple. A banana is another fruit. So are grapes and strawberries.”**
- **Teach your child to ask for help when they do not understand what a word means.**
- **Point out objects that are the same or different.** Talk about what makes them the same or different. Maybe they are the same color. Maybe they are both animals. Maybe one is big, and one is little.
- **Act out stories.** Play house, school, and store using dolls, figures, and dress-up clothes. Have the dolls talk to each other.
- **Tell stories that are easy to follow.** Help your child guess what will happen next in the story. Act out the stories, or put on puppet shows. Have your child draw a picture of a scene from the story. You can do the same thing with books, videos, and TV shows. Ask **who, what, when, where, or why** questions about the story.
- **Play games like “I Spy.”** Describe something you see, like, **“I spy something round on the wall that you use to tell the time.”** Let your child guess what it is. Let your child describe something they see. This helps them learn to listen and to use words to talk about what they see.
- **Let your child tell you how to do something.** Draw a picture that they describe. Write down your child’s story as they tell it. Your child will learn the power of storytelling and writing.
- **Play board games with your child.** This will help them learn to follow rules and talk about the game.
- **Have your child help you plan daily activities.** For example, have them make a shopping list for the grocery store. Or, let them help you plan their birthday party. Ask their opinion, and let them make choices.
- **Talk to your child in the languages you are most comfortable using.** There are many benefits and options for daily reading for children. Be sure to read books in your languages to promote multilingual language and literacy skills.



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HELP TODAY.**

[asha.org/profind](https://asha.org/profind)



**CURIOUS ABOUT OTHER  
AGE RANGES?**

[on.asha.org/dev-milestones](https://on.asha.org/dev-milestones)



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