Language Development 4-5 years

***Children develop at their own rate. Your child might not have all skills until the end of the age range.***

What should my child be able to do?

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| **Hearing and Understanding** | **Talking** |
| * Understands words for order, like *first*, *next*, and *last*. * Understands words for time, like *yesterday*, *today*, and *tomorrow*. * Follows longer directions, like “Put your pajamas on, brush your teeth, and then pick out a book.” * Follows classroom directions, like “Draw a circle on your paper around something you eat.” * Hears and understands most of what she hears at home and in school. | * Says all speech sounds in words. May make mistakes on sounds that are harder to say, like *l*, *s*, *r*, *v*, *z*, *ch*, *sh*, and *th*. * Responds to “What did you say?” * Talks without repeating sounds or words most of the time. * Names letters and numbers. * Uses sentences that have more than 1 action word, like *jump*, *play*, and *get*. May make some mistakes, like “Zach gots 2 video games, but I got one.” * Tells a short story. * Keeps a conversation going. * Talks in different ways, depending on the listener and place. Your child may use short sentences with younger children. He may talk louder outside than inside. |

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*.
* Give your child clues, and have him guess the object.
* Talk about categories, like fruits, furniture, and shapes. Sort items into categories. Have your child tell you which item does not belong. Talk about why it doesn’t belong.
* Let your child tell you how to do something.
* Pay attention when your child speaks. Respond, praise, and encourage him when he talks. Get his attention before you speak. Pause after speaking, and let him respond to what you said.
* Keep teaching your child new words. Define words, and help your child understand them. For example, say, “This *vehicle* is on the highway. It is a car. A bus is another kind of vehicle. So are a train and an airplane.”
* Teach your child to ask for help when she does 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, doctor, and store using dolls, figures, and dress-up clothes. Have the dolls talk to each other.
* Read 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 videos and TV shows. Ask who, what, when, where, or why questions about the story.
* Play game 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 he sees. This helps him learn to listen and to use words to talk about what he sees.
* Give your child 2-step directions, like “Get your coat from the closet and put it on.” Let your child tell you how to do something. Draw a picture that he describes. Write down your child’s story as she tells it. Your child will learn the power of storytelling and writing.
* Play board games with your child. This will help him learn to follow rules and talk about the game.
* Have your child help you plan daily activities. For example, have her make a shopping list for the grocery store. Or, let her help you plan her birthday party. Ask her opinion, and let her make choices.
* Talk to your child in the language you are most comfortable using.

From [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org). The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 198,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists;

speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists;

audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.