



Understanding how children learn to communicate and talk – Part 2

Typical Stages of Communication Development

Below are the ***basic, essential communication skills*** that most children develop during their first two years of life.

Communicating *Before Words* (Non-Verbal):

- Child uses different *non-verbal* (i.e. *voice, face and body*) “signals” to try to get what they want or need, including:
 - Eye Contact
 - Body movements (e.g. clapping hands together, tapping objects)
 - Physical contact (e.g. pulling another’s hand)
 - Making sounds
 - Reaching
 - Pointing
 - Head shaking and nodding
- Child *clearly directs* these non-verbal communication signals *towards others* to get what they want or need.
- Child *combines* eye contact, vocalizations and gestures *together* to effectively communicate with others.
- Child can *monitor* another’s eyes, facial expressions and body language while communicating to determine if they are receiving the child’s message.
- Child *reads* and *understands* other people’s *non-verbal* communication (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, and body language).

Communicating *with words* (Verbal):

- Child *spontaneously* communicates:
 - To get what they want
 - To name things they are interested in
 - To share what they like or are interested in with others
- Child *spontaneously* talks:
 - With single sounds
 - With many different sounds
 - With single words unclearly
 - With single words more clearly
 - With two words together
 - With three words together, etc.
- Child understands:
 - A few specific words for their favorite things
 - Many single words
 - Two words together, etc.

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