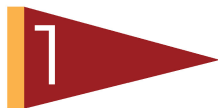




PRESCHOOLERS

Communication development is complicated and there are many ways to get to the finish line. This can make it difficult to know when to refer for evaluation and when to wait it out. Keep your eyes out for these red flags along the road. They should never be ignored!

Communication Development: 5 RED FLAGS



ARTICULATION. An unfamiliar listener should be able to understand 50% of what a 2-year-old says and 100% of what a 4-year-old says. Anything less warrants a referral for an evaluation.



EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE. Most of a 2-year-old's phrases should be two words long, a 3-year old's should mostly be three words long, and so on. A child who isn't combining any words by 30 months should be evaluated by a speech-language pathologist.



RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE. A 2-year-old should be able to follow simple verbal instructions and a 4-year-old should be able to follow complex verbal instructions. If a preschool-aged child cannot go to the other room to retrieve an object when asked, their understanding of language should be evaluated.



STUTTERING. While a 2-to 3-year-old may stutter as they acquire a new language, stuttering that involves struggle, tension, force, or stoppage of airflow may not be developmental in nature and should be formally assessed.



SOCIAL LANGUAGE. 2-year-olds should eagerly engage with those around them using eye contact, pointing, commenting, requesting, and protesting. If any of these are absent, the child should be referred for an evaluation.