

SPEECH DELAY

Is my child's speech development normal?

Normal speech development can look very different from child to child because there is such a wide range in what is considered normal. The *average* speech and language milestones for children include (keep in mind that there is a range of normal development):

- 12 months: using at least 1-2 specific words
- 18 months: using 10-20 words, understanding one-step commands
- 2 years: using >50 words, putting two words together, understanding two-step commands
- 3 years: using too many words to count, speaking in short sentences, speech understandable about 75% of the time
- 4 years: speaking in full, intelligible sentences

What can cause speech delay?

It is important to have your child with speech delay evaluated by a doctor, as there are a variety of causes that need to be considered which include:

- Isolated speech/language disorder (see below)
- Hearing loss
- Part of a more global developmental delay
- Autism spectrum disorder

What are the types of speech/language disorders?

- Expressive language disorder ("late talkers")
- Mixed receptive/expressive language disorder
- Phonological disorder (articulation issues)
- Stuttering disorder

What evaluation is needed for speech delay?

Your doctor will ask many questions about all domains of your child's development to ensure there are isolated speech/language concerns. Often, a hearing test by an audiologist will be recommended as it is important to rule out hearing loss as a cause of speech delay.

To determine the extent of the delays, your pediatrician may recommend an evaluation by a speech language pathologist (SLP)

What can be done?

SLPs specialize in speech development in children and their job is both to evaluate speech disorders and to provide therapy to encourage your child's development. In Calgary, preschool SLP assessments are by self-referral, meaning you can call and arrange an appointment for your child:

Preschool SLP Services 403-955-1300

If your child is in school, public SLP assessments and therapy are provided through the school. Alternatively, private assessments may be pursued. For a list of private providers see:

www.childrenslink.ca under "Speech Services"