



West Virginia Resource Guide for Families of Young Children Birth to Five with Hearing Loss



Revised Addendum: Language Milestones, Birth to Age 5

Language Milestones

Regardless of the mode of language that your child is using to communicate, you want him/her to progress along developmental milestones that are appropriate for his/her age. In this section are developmental milestones that you can use to track your child's progress. If at any time he/she is not on target with the milestones, you can talk with your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team members and discuss suggestions to support your child's language development.

Note: *Simultaneous Communication Approach*

As mentioned under **Communication & Language, Simultaneous Communication** combines spoken language together with sign language. Most of the approaches use American Sign Language signs but use English word order. Many include speech, speech reading, finger spelling, natural gestures, and the use of residual hearing and/or amplification. These visual communication approaches are intended to make English more visible while being used with spoken English. Although using signs, the Milestones for Spoken English (adapting for sign language) should be your guide for language development.



Milestones for Spoken English

Excerpted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- Milestone Moments

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
2 Months	Receptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shows a startle response ▶ Turns head toward sounds ▶ Pays attention to faces Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Coos, makes gurgling sounds ▶ Begins to smile at people ▶ Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if activity doesn't change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cuddle, talk, and play with your child during feeding, dressing, and bathing. ▶ Act excited and smile when your child makes sounds. ▶ Copy your child's sounds sometimes, but also use clear language. ▶ Talk, read, and sing to your child. ▶ Look at pictures with your child and talk about them.
4 Months	Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Begins to babble ▶ Babbles with expression and copies sounds he/she hears ▶ Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hold and talk to your child; smile and be cheerful while you do. ▶ Copy your child's sounds. ▶ Have quiet play times when you read or sing to your child.
6 Months	Receptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Responds to sounds by making sounds ▶ Responds to own name Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure ▶ Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b") ▶ Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh") and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use "reciprocal" play—when he smiles, you smile; when he makes sounds, you copy them. ▶ Repeat your child's sounds and say simple words with those sounds. For example, if your child says "bah," say "bottle" or "book." ▶ Read books to your child every day. Praise him/her when he/she babbles and "reads" too. ▶ When your child looks at something, point to it and talk about it. ▶ Read colorful picture books to your child. ▶ Point out new things to your child and name them. ▶ Show your child bright pictures in a magazine and name them.
9 Months	Receptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understands "no" Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa" ▶ Copies sounds and gestures of others ▶ Uses fingers to point at things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Say what you think your child is feeling. For example, say, "You are so sad, let's see if we can make you feel better." ▶ Describe what your child is looking at; for example, "the ball is red and round." ▶ Talk about what your child wants when he points at something. ▶ Copy your child's sounds and words. ▶ Ask for behaviors that you want. For example, instead of saying "Don't stand," say "Time to sit."

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
12 Months	Receptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Responds to simple spoken requests Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uses simple gestures, like shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye” ▶ Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech) ▶ Says “mama” and “dada” and exclamations like “uh-oh!” ▶ Tries to say words you say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talk to your child about what you’re doing. For example, “Mommy is washing your hands with a washcloth.” ▶ Read with your child every day. Have your child turn the pages. Take turns labeling pictures with your child. ▶ Build on what your child says or tries to say, or what he points to. If he points to a truck and says “t” or “truck,” say, “Yes, that’s a big, blue truck.” ▶ Ask your child to label body parts or things you see while driving in the car. ▶ Sing songs with actions, like “The Itsy Bitsy Spider” and “Wheels on the Bus.” Help your child do the actions with you.
18 Months	Receptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say “Sit down” Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Says several single words ▶ Says and shakes head “no” ▶ Points to show someone what he wants ▶ Points to one body part 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Describe his/her emotions. For example, say, “You are happy when we read this book.” ▶ Read books and talk about the pictures using simple words. ▶ Copy your child’s words. ▶ Use words that describe feelings and emotions. ▶ Use simple, clear phrases. ▶ Ask simple questions. ▶ Name pictures in books and body parts.
2 Years	Receptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Knows names of familiar people and body parts ▶ Follows simple instructions ▶ Follows two-step instructions such as “Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet” Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Points to things or pictures when they are named ▶ Says sentences with 2 to 4 words ▶ Repeats words overheard in conversation ▶ Points to things in a book ▶ Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books ▶ Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teach your child to identify and say body parts, animals, and other common things. ▶ Do not correct your child when he says words incorrectly. Rather, say it correctly. For example, “That is a ball.” ▶ Encourage your child to say a word instead of pointing. If your child can’t say the whole word (“milk”), give her the first sound (“m”) to help. ▶ Over time, you can prompt your child to say the whole sentence — “I want milk.” ▶ Help your child do puzzles with shapes, colors, or farm animals. Name each piece when your child puts it in place. ▶ Do art projects with your child using crayons, paint, and paper. Describe what your child makes and hang it on the wall or refrigerator. ▶ Ask your child to help you open doors and drawers and turn pages in a book or magazine.

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
3 Years	Receptive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can name most familiar things ▶ Says first name, age, and sex ▶ Names a friend ▶ Says words like "I," "me," "we," and "you" and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats) ▶ Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time ▶ Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Give your child instructions with 2 or 3 steps. For example, "Go to your room and get your shoes and coat." ▶ Read to your child every day. Ask your child to point to things in the pictures and repeat words after you. ▶ Play matching games. Ask your child to find objects in books or round the house that are the same. ▶ Play counting games. Count body parts, stairs, and other things you use or see every day.
4 Years	Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talks about what he/she likes and what he/she is interested in ▶ Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" and "she" ▶ Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or the "Wheels on the Bus" ▶ Tells stories ▶ Can say first and last name ▶ Names some colors and some numbers ▶ Tells you what he/she thinks is going to happen next in a book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use good grammar when speaking to your child. Instead of "Mommy wants you to come here," say, "I want you to come here." ▶ Use words like "first," "second," and "finally" when talking about everyday activities. This will help your child learn about sequence of events. ▶ Take time to answer your child's "why" questions. If you don't know the answer, say "I don't know," or help your child find the answer in a book, on the Internet, or from another adult. ▶ When you read with your child, ask him/her to tell you what happened in the story as you go. ▶ Say colors in books, pictures, and things at home. ▶ Count common items, like the number of snack crackers, stairs, or toy trains.
5 Years	Expressive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Speaks very clearly ▶ Tells a simple story using full sentences ▶ Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here" ▶ Says name and address ▶ Likes to sing, dance, and act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ When reading to your child, ask him/her to predict what will happen next in the story. ▶ Encourage your child to "read" by looking at the pictures and telling the story. ▶ Teach your child time concepts like morning, afternoon, evening, today, tomorrow, and yesterday. ▶ Start teaching the days of the week.

Milestones for American Sign Language

Excerpted from: Affiliated Services for Children and Youth: <https://ascy.ca/sign-language/>; My SmartHands: <https://www.mysmarthands.com/child-sign-language/milestones-for-deaf-babies/>; HandsSpeak: <https://www.mysmarthands.com/child-sign-language/milestones-for-deaf-babies/>; ASL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT, Early Childhood Education Department, California School for the Deaf

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Looks around with alertness ▶ Is attracted to any human movement ▶ Looks attentively at a person's face ▶ Enjoys cuddling and holding ▶ Plays with hands and fingers and enjoys hand play ▶ Recognizes and responds to sounds, movement, or light ▶ Responds to changes in facial expressions ▶ Responds to smiles by smiling back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sign to your child. ▶ Look at your child when feeding, bathing or changing him/her and sign about what you are doing. ▶ Comment on things you and your child are doing by signing about them. ▶ Learn what hand babbling looks like. ▶ Acknowledge and expand hand babbling by repeating it. ▶ Look for first signs and repeat and expand on what your child signs. ▶ Share ASL children's literature with your child. ▶ Play with your child using "ASL rhymes and rhythms" (see Resource section) and have fun. ▶ Play with hand shapes and use lots of facial expression when playing with your child. ▶ Place fun, colorful pictures of ASL and the finger-spelled alphabet in your child's room. ▶ Place a mirror in your child's room, positioned so he/she can see you entering and leaving the room. ▶ Share picture books.
6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Smiles, makes eye contact and laughs ▶ Likes to be held facing out, towards any action that is happening ▶ Laughs when seeing fingers approaching tickle ▶ Turns eyes to a flashing light ▶ Turns towards vibrations when the doorbell or phone rings ▶ Is attracted to moving and colored objects ▶ Plays with hands and fingers and enjoys hand play ▶ Copies parent's movements involving hands, arms, and face such as signing "milk" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Respond to what your child is signing rather than how he/she signs it. ▶ Smile and laugh with your child. ▶ Sign with your child to say what you are doing when you feed, bathe, and dress him/her. ▶ Accept and expand your child's sign attempts and respond naturally with adult signs. ▶ Sign ASL stories: with books; without books; with made up stories about pictures; hand shape stories. ▶ Show your child sign story videos and ASL poetry videos for children.

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
6 Months		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have a conversation by signing back when your child signs with you. ▶ Play games using toys and objects that your child enjoys. ▶ Show interest in the hand shapes and facial expressions your child makes and repeat them back. ▶ Hold your child while using body rhythm or body movement.
9 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enjoys hand babbling – repetitive hand movements such as opening and closing hands in rhythm without associated leg movements ▶ Turns head to locate moving objects, and to watch sign movements used to communicate ▶ Looks at common objects and family members when named in ASL ▶ Understands simple ASL words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use a variety of signs and facial expressions when you have a conversation with your child. ▶ Recognize and respond to the meaning that's conveyed in your child's facial expressions. ▶ Act out stories with your child. ▶ Encourage your child to play with other children who use ASL, for example, at play groups or ASL story circle times. ▶ Have fun playing with your child and communicating about everything in his or her and your world! ▶ Point to people, pictures, and common objects, sign their names and use simple ASL grammar. ▶ Watch ASL signed children's videos with your child. ▶ Look at books, point to the pictures, and name them in ASL. ▶ Play games such as peek-a-boo with signs. ▶ Show interest in the signs your child makes and repeat them back. ▶ Do ASL nursery rhymes with your child.

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
12 Months	<p>Receptive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Responds to a request (i.e. Come here) <p>Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Begins hand babbling (ex: opens and closing hands) with varied patterns (wiggles fingers, wrist twist) ▶ Begins to use simple movements with hand shapes, such as straight forward or up and down ▶ Points to self and things ▶ Signs first ASL words using simple hand shapes, such as "mine," "more," "milk," "mommy" ▶ Has a vocabulary of 10 signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Look at your child when feeding, bathing, or changing him/her. Comment on things you and your child are doing by signing about them. ▶ Sign with your child. ▶ Play with hand shapes and use lots of facial expressions when playing with your child. ▶ Learn what hand babbling looks like. Acknowledge and expand hand babbling by repeating it. ▶ Place fun, colorful pictures of ASL and the finger-spelled alphabet in your child's room. ▶ Place a mirror in your child's room, positioned so he/she can see you entering and leaving the room. ▶ Hold your child while bouncing or dancing. ▶ Share picture books. Share ASL children's literature. ▶ Look for first signs, then repeat and expand on what your child signs. ▶ Play with your child using ASL rhymes and rhythms and have fun.
18 Months	<p>Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uses 20 or more ASL words and/or signs ▶ Begins to combine ASL words into simple two sign sentences, such as "eat more," "ouch fall" ▶ Uses touch and gesture to show what is needed ▶ Points and can sign some letters of the alphabet ▶ Shakes head "No" or "Can't" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Smile and laugh with your child. ▶ Sign with your child to say what you are doing when you feed, bathe and dress him/her. ▶ Show interest in the hand shapes and facial expressions your child makes and repeat them back. ▶ Hold your child while using body rhythm or body movement. ▶ Respond to what your child is signing rather than how he/she signs it. ▶ Accept and expand your child's sign attempts and respond naturally with adult signs. ▶ Sign ASL stories with books, without books, with made up stories about pictures. ▶ Play hand shape stories. ▶ Show your child sign story videos and ASL poetry videos. ▶ Have a conversation by signing back when your child signs to you. ▶ Play games using toys and objects that your child enjoys.

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
2 Years	<p>Receptive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relates experiences using short sentences with greater frequency over time ▶ Recognizes own name when spoken or signed ▶ Recognizes names of family members when spoken or signed <p>Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Signs reflect basic handshapes with simple movements (straight forward, up, or down) ▶ Combines two or more ASL words, such as "Bath upstairs," "Bye bye daddy," "Stroller outside," "Child cry" ▶ Child uses variety of signs and facial expressions when you have a conversation with your child ▶ Signs may not be exact ASL signs ▶ Intentionally points to self and others ▶ Begins to tell stories about here and now ▶ Loves ASL stories and stories from books ▶ Copies actions and facial expressions of characters in a story ▶ Takes turns talking back and forth with you ▶ May have a vocabulary of 50-100+ words and/or signs. ▶ Answers questions with Yes and No ▶ Answers yes or no, with facial expressions such as raised or frowned eyebrows ▶ Uses simple words or signs describing words (i.e. hot, cold, big, little) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Point to people, pictures common objects, and sign their names using simple ASL grammar. ▶ Watch signed children's videos with your child. ▶ Look at books, point to the pictures and name them in ASL. ▶ Play games such as peek-a-boo with signs. ▶ Show interest in the signs your child makes and repeat them back. ▶ Do ASL nursery rhymes with your child. ▶ Use a variety of signs and facial expressions when you have a conversation with your child. ▶ Recognize and respond to the meaning that's conveyed in your child's facial expressions. ▶ Act out stories with your child. ▶ Encourage your child to play with other children who use ASL, for example, at play groups or ASL story circle times. ▶ Have fun playing with your child and communicating about everything in his/her and your world!

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
3 Years	<p>Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Has a vocabulary of 250-350 + word and/or signs. (from the Gallaudet VCSL checklist) ▶ At this stage, your child has a word for almost everything and can use two or three words. e.g., "Mommy make cake." "Daddy kiss Mommy." etc. ▶ Uses pronouns (e.g., I, you, he, she, they, me) and prepositions (e.g., on, in) ▶ Sign order used to show semantic relations ▶ Signs a few nursery rhymes ▶ Attempts more complex signs but substitutes basic handshapes for the complex handshapes ▶ Begins to raise/squint eyebrows for yes/no and who, what, where, and why questions ▶ Refers to things around them during conversations and storytelling; may copy the actions and facial expressions of others in a story ▶ Counts to 5 ▶ Signs for all needs ▶ Requests help when needed ▶ Uses and understand two step commands ▶ Expresses emotions like happy, sad and mad with signs ▶ Uses expressives (i.e my, your) ▶ Begins to sign name on request 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore books together. ▶ Read, read and read with your child. ▶ Expand and extend your child's utterances, use adult ASL grammar and add new information. ▶ Expand and extend ASL conversations with your child. ▶ Do ASL nursery rhymes with your child. ▶ Use a variety of signs and facial expressions when you have a conversation with your child. ▶ Significant people in your child's world should have a sign name. ▶ Embed communication across all routines. ▶ Explore the world together....label and sign about everything.
4 Years	<p>Receptive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pays attention to short stories ▶ Concept of past and future time develops <p>Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Begins to ask who, what, where, and how questions ▶ Begins to have significant increase in vocabulary ▶ Uses four-word sentences ▶ Can combine between four to six words or signs ▶ Starts to talk about what may have happened away from home. Most of the time, other people can understand what the child is saying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore books together. ▶ Read, read and read with your child. ▶ Expand and extend your child's ASL conversations; use adult ASL grammar and add new information. ▶ Do ASL nursery rhymes with your child. ▶ Use a variety of signs and facial expressions when you have a conversation with your child. ▶ Significant people in your child's world should have a sign name. ▶ Embed communication across all routines. ▶ Explore the world together; label and sign about everything.

What Most Children Do At:	What Most Babies Do	What You Can Do
4 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Begins to use handshapes to describe manner, place, direction, size, shape, degree and intensity. ▶ Begins to show distinctions between noun-verb pairs i.e., fly/ airplane ▶ Begins to communicate fluently clearly and is easily understood by most people ▶ Starts to sign with emotion and body language when describing an event or action 	
5 Years	<p>Receptive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understands time concepts and seasons of the year <p>Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can produce longer and detailed utterances of over six signed words in length. He/she can sign clearly and fluently ▶ More complex: handshapes and movement (wiggling fingers, twisting wrists) used accurately ▶ Uses topic continuation (holds sign with one hand and continues signing with other) ▶ Uses body shift and eye gaze to communicate perspective and location ▶ Uses grammatical features of ASL (hand shapes, palm orientation, location, movement and facial expression) ▶ Begins to use noun modifications to show different meaning (e.g., repeating the noun to show plural) ▶ Begins to set up points in space to establish location for people and objects not present in the environment ▶ Role-playing used more frequently with characters clearly identified, but skills to show in changes in roles such as body shifts, eye gaze, and facial expression not used consistently ▶ Begins to ask what is the meaning of this 'word' or 'sign'? (What does it mean?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore books together. ▶ Read, read and read with your child. ▶ Expand and extend your child's ASL conversations, use adult ASL grammar and add new information. ▶ Do ASL nursery rhymes with your child. ▶ Use a variety of signs and facial expressions when you have a conversation ▶ Explore the world together; label and sign about everything. ▶ Significant people in your child's world should have a sign name. ▶ Embed communication across all routines with your child.



West Virginia Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources as lead agency and administered through the Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.