



The New Jersey
Parent Resource Guide
for Children who are
Deaf or Hard of Hearing
Ages Birth to Five Years



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



The New Jersey Parent Resource Guide

for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

This parent resource guide was created in response to New Jersey Public Law 2019, Chapter 205, incorporating the recommendations made by the Working Group on Deaf Education. Its purpose is to assist families with monitoring and tracking the receptive and expressive language acquisition and developmental stages toward English literacy of children from birth to five years of age who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Children who are Deaf or hard of hearing who do not have accessible communication are at risk of delays in language acquisition, both receptively and expressively. Language development milestone checklists are informal measures designed for families to observe and keep a record of their child's progress.

There are several language development milestone charts available, including the California Language Development Milestone checklist that incorporates both American Sign Language and English milestones, which is contained within this document. Another resource for understanding your child's listening and spoken language development can be found on the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)**](#) website.

The [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)**](#) has a website that outlines various developmental milestones, including listening and spoken language, as well as social and emotional, cognitive, and movement/physical development. Printable milestone checklists, a video and photo library of milestones, organized by age, and a Milestone Tracking App are also available on the CDC website.

While not specific to language development, there are several resources available for families on the many decisions that are involved with raising a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing, including communication options, hearing aids and cochlear implants, Deaf Culture, educational resources, and family support. When viewing these resources and when talking to professionals, families might find it helpful to refer to this [Glossary of Terms](#) developed by the hearing consultants at the New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) Regional Early Intervention Collaboratives (REICs).

- [AG Bell Family Resources](#)

The AG Bell website includes numerous resources for families that have elected to utilize listening and spoken language.

- [American Society for Deaf Children \(ASDC\)**](#)

The ASDC website reflects their mission of "empowering diverse families with deaf children and youth by embracing full access to language-rich environments through mentoring, advocacy, resources, and collaborative networks."

** Available in languages in addition to English



Parent Resource Guide

for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- **[Beginnings for Parents of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc.**](#)**
Beginnings provides impartial support for families and professionals. The website includes a wide variety of resources such as communicating with your child, technology, the hearing system, and connection with other parents.
- **[CDC Parent's Guide](#)**
This website includes a wealth of information for families such as understanding hearing loss, language and communication options, decision making, a glossary, and additional resources.
- **[The Center on Sensory and Complex Disabilities](#)**
The New Jersey Center on Deafblindness provides resources for professionals and families of children with complex disabilities, including Deafblindness.
- **[Clerc Center Family Resources](#)**
The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University website offers a range of resources for and professionals on a multitude of topics.
- **[The Family Matters \(NJEIS Regional Early Intervention Collaborative\)**](#)**
The Family Matters website provides information such as implications of hearing loss, communication options, creating listening environments, and ASL for families of children who are Deaf or hard of hearing in their resource library.
- **[Hands and Voices](#)**
Hands and Voices is a parent-driven organization that supports families, regardless of mode of communication. This website contains many resources, including:
 - **[Parent's Guide to Early Intervention](#)**
 - **[Parent Tip Sheets: Language, Literacy & Social Emotional Development](#)**
- **[Hearing First](#)**
Hearing First provides resources and support for families that have chosen listening and spoken language, focusing on the "critical early days and along their journey raising their child, whenever they have questions or just need to connect with someone."
- **[National Center on Deaf-Blindness](#)**
This website offers resources for families and professionals on deaf-blindness.
- **[National Cued Speech Association**](#)**
This website offers resources for families and professionals who utilize cued speech to support listening.
- **[New Jersey Department of Education Resources for Students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind](#)**
This website provides information for families and professionals in New Jersey on a variety of topics, including the NJ Deaf Student's Bill of Rights and Communication Plan for Students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deafblind, and a list of educational programs in NJ.

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- **[New Jersey Department of Education Families Portal](#)**
The Families Portal is intended to be a central location to provide support and information related to parent and family engagement in student learning and development. It is also a navigation system designed to help parents and families understand how the education system works at the state and local levels. In addition, the portal is a dynamic source of ideas for educators and families who are seeking ways to strengthen their partnership programs.
- **[New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#)**
The mission of the NJ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) is to provide education, advocacy, and direct services to eliminate barriers and promote increased accessibility to programs, services, and information routinely available to the state's general population. **[Leveling the Playing Field](#)** provides language acquisition services through ASL Deaf Language Associates in childcare setting, homes, preschools, or other applicable programs. Guidance on choosing a childcare center and the importance of language acquisition for a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing can found on the Leveling the Playing Field web page.
- **[New Jersey Early Intervention System \(NJEIS\)**](#)**
This website provides detailed information about the New Jersey Early Intervention System.
- **[New Jersey Department of Health: If Your Child has Hearing Loss**](#)**
This website provides resources, including the types of professionals that might be encountered, for families whose young child has been identified as being Deaf or hard of hearing.
- **[New Jersey Department of Health: Newborn Hearing Screening**](#)**
Families can find information about the newborn hearing screening and the process on this website. It also includes an informative video introducing families to a diverse group of young individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing who share their stories.
- **[Parenting a Child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing](#)**
This Boys Town National Research Hospital's website provides information on a wide range of topics that include universal newborn hearing screening, hearing, hearing devices, communicating, language and learning, and parenting and support.
- **[SPAN Parent Advocacy Network**](#)**
SPAN is an organization that provides resources and support to families of children with a variety of needs, including those who are Deaf or hard of hearing. SPAN and the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) collaborated on the Deaf Mentor Program** that pairs families with Deaf adults.
- **[VL2 Family Information Center](#)**
This website provides research-based information on ASL and bilingualism for families with Deaf and hard of hearing children, including reading to your child and a parent toolkit.

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Language Development Milestones¹

The Language Development Milestones checklist is designed for families to observe and keep a record of their child's progress. The checklist can be shared with your child's educational team during meetings. Please note that this is not a formal assessment of language and literacy development. Your observations of your child's receptive and expressive language at home might be different than what is observed in the educational setting.

The First Year

During their 1st year, babies are watching, learning, and soaking up the language around them. Even though babies don't always speak or sign too much during this first year, babies are absorbing all those words you sign or say to them, so be sure to talk and sign to your baby all the time!

0-3 months

- Your baby looks around and is attentive to people's faces.
- Your baby smiles when they see you.
- Your baby shows awareness of the environment.
- Your baby recognizes and responds to a person's voice or to movement or light.

Notes:

4-6 months

- Your baby begins to babble with hands and/or voice. Your baby may use babbling to get your attention.
- Your baby copies your movements involving arms, head, hands, and face.
- Your baby responds to changes in the tone of your voice and/or changes in your facial expressions.
- Your baby expresses feelings by cooing, gurgling, and crying when alone or when playing with you.
- Your baby looks at you or vocalizes when you sign or say their name.

Notes:



7-12 months

Your baby points to self and to things.

Your baby imitates and expresses their first words or signs, such as mine, more, milk, mommy, daddy.

Your baby makes onomatopoeia (sound) words such as choo choo, swish, and buzz.

Your baby babbles with inflection/facial expressions similar to adults and tries to imitate turn-taking conversation.

Your baby demonstrates joint attention (e.g., parent and child look at the same object).

Your baby can tell what different facial expressions mean.

Your baby uses gesture or vocalizations to protest and express emotions.

Your baby responds to a request (e.g., come here).

Your baby understands words for common items (e.g., cup, shoe, juice) and family names.

Your baby responds to the word, "no" most of the time.

Your baby looks at people's faces and at the environment attentively.

Your baby turns their head and looks in response to sounds or attention-getting behaviors (e.g., hand waving, lights on/off, foot stomping).

By 12 months of age, your baby has 1-3 signs and/or words.

Notes:

One - Two Years of Age

Between their 1st and 2nd birthdays, babies learn lots of words and start putting words together to make short sentences. Here are some things to watch for.

Expressive Language

Your baby uses exclamatory expressions (e.g., uh-oh, no-no).

Your baby repeats the last word used by an adult.

Your baby communicates wants and needs through single words.

Your baby uses signed or spoken names to refer to self and others.

Your baby begins to use pronouns (e.g., me, my, mine).

Your baby begins to use two-word phrases (e.g., my milk, mommy shoe).

Your baby asks to be read to.

Your baby labels their own drawings/scribbles with 1-2 spoken words or signs.

Your baby asks simple questions (e.g., What that?, Where mommy?).

Your baby takes 1-2 turns in a conversation.



One - Two Years of Age

Notes:

Receptive Language

- Your baby recognizes their own name when it is spoken or signed.
- Your baby recognizes the names of family members when they are signed or spoken.
- Your baby understands simple commands (e.g., Come here, Give it to me, Sit down).
- Your baby understands a few simple question forms (e.g. who, what, where, yes/no).
- Your baby points to at least 5 body parts on self or doll when asked.
- Your baby points to pictures named on a page.
- Your baby attends to and enjoys simple stores of rhymes.
- Your baby recognizes the first letter of their name.
- Your baby recognizes their favorite book by its cover.
- Your baby pretends to "read" books.
- Your baby begins to understand how books are used (e.g., turns several pages at a time, holds book right side up).

Notes:

Vocabulary

- By the age of 2 years, your baby has a vocabulary of at least 50-100+ words, primarily labels for people, food, animals, toys, and action words.
- By the age of 2 years, your baby has begun to use simple two spoken or signed word phrases (e.g., baby cry, more milk, my cup, no juice).

Notes:



Two - Three Years

During this year, your child will learn to say and sign so many words, you will have a hard time keeping track. Your child will also start to use longer and more complicated sentences. Tracking your child's language this year should be exciting!

Expressive Language

- Your child names objects/animals/people in pictures and in person when asked.
- Your child signs or says their full name on request.
- Your child counts to 5.
- Your child vocalizes or signs for all needs.
- Your child requests help when needed.
- Your child uses commands with two steps (e.g., sit down - eat).
- Your child relates experiences using short sentences with greater frequency over time.
- Your child recites a few spoken or signed nursery rhymes.
- Your child enjoys signed or spoken stories and imitates the actions/facial expressions of characters in the story.
- Your child verbalizes or signs prepositions (e.g., on, under).
- Your child expresses emotions like happy, sad, mad with signs or spoken words.
- Your child speaks or signs in a way that is understood by family members and friends most of the time.
- Your child uses intelligible (clearly understood) words or signs about 80% of the time.
- Your child uses most basic sentence structures.
- Your child uses the sign or word "and."
- Your child uses singular/plural noun-verb agreement (e.g., boy walks, boys walk).
- Your child uses possessives (e.g., my, your).
- Your child uses past tense in sentences (e.g., Mommy cooked, Susie ran).
- Your child uses over generalized words (e.g., calls all animals "puppy").
- By 2 and ½ years of age, your child answers questions with yes or no.
- Your child asks two-word questions.
- Your child begins the "why" question stage.
- Your child asks "who" questions.
- Your child uses pronouns (e.g., he, she, it), including personal pronouns (e.g., I, me, my, mine), and possessive pronouns (e.g., his, her).
- Your child uses number + noun (e.g., two doggie).
- Your child uses simple describing words (e.g., hot, cold, big, little).
- Your child names at least three colors.
- Your child uses negatives (e.g., no, none, not, don't like, don't know, not-yet).

Notes:



Two - Three Years

Receptive Language

- Your child understands two stage commands (e.g., Sit down and read the book).
- Your child notices (e.g., points, gets excited) sights, sounds like the videophone or doorbell flashing/ringing.
- Your child responds appropriately to a location phrase (e.g., in, on).
- Your child begins to understand time phrases (e.g. yesterday, today).

Notes:

Vocabulary

- By three years of age, your child has a vocabulary of 500+ words and/or signs.

Notes:

Three - Four Years of Age

By now, your child is able to communicate clearly, and is understood most of the time by familiar adults. Your child understands most of what is said or signed to him or her. Your child is using four to five words sentences, can repeat simple nursery rhymes, and is able to carry on simple conversations.

Expressive Language

- Your child communicates fluently, clearly, and is easily understood by family and familiar adults.
- Your child answers questions logically.
- Your child uses 4-5 word sentences.
- Your child carries on simple conversations staying on topic through 3-4 turns.
- Your child talks about things that have happened at school or with friends.
- Your child discusses storybooks that are read to him or her.
- Your child describes action in pictures.
- Your child uses possessives (e.g., mine, yours, his, hers).



Three - Four Years of Age

Expressive Language

Your child is able to repeat a simple signed or spoken rhyme.

Your child makes attempts to read and write.

If using ASL, your child uses classifiers to describe manner, place, direction, size, shape, degree, and intensity.

Notes:

Receptive Language

Your child understands most of what is communicated to them.

Your child understands "Who?", "What?", "Where?", "Why?", and "How?" questions.

Your child carries out 2-4 simple unrelated successive commands (e.g., Sit down and eat your lunch).

Your child gives you objects as you request them by name.

Your child points to or places objects on top/bottom, up/down at your request.

Notes:

Vocabulary

By four years of age, your child uses 1,500-1,600 words or signs.

Notes:

Four - Five Years of Age

By this age, your child should be able to use correct sentences to express thoughts about the past, present, and future. By the end of this year, your child should have several thousand words and/signs.



Four - Five Years of Age

Expressive Language

Your child signs and/or speaks clearly and fluently in an easy-to-understand manner.

Your child uses long and detailed sentences.

Your child can tell made-up stories that stay on topic. (For ASL users, your child can use space in storytelling.)

For children using spoken language, most sounds are pronounced correctly, though he/she may have difficulty with "r", "v", and "th".

Your child uses rhyming with words and/or signs.

Your child identifies some written letters and numbers.

Your child uses 4-8 word/sign sentences.

Your child uses "has," "does," "had."

Your child uses "because...," "when...," "if...," and "so...," in clauses.

Your child uses "these" and "those."

Your child uses "before" and "after."

Your child answers "Why" and "How" questions.

Your child speaks or signs with emotion and body language when describing an event or action.

Your child ends conversations appropriately.

Your child asks "What" questions.

Your child asks "Who" questions.

Your child asks "Where" questions.

Your child asks "Why" questions.

Your child asks "Why do" questions.

Your child uses past tense.

Your child uses future tense.

Your child uses conditional sentences, as in these sentences:

English (If...then...).

ASL (topicalized sentence).

If using ASL, your child uses the five ASL parameters of handshape, palm orientation, location, movement, and facial expression (e.g., button, cat, fox).

In ASL, your child uses number distribution, e.g., talking about leaves falling -

FALL SINGULAR - One leaf falls;

FALL PLURAL - Many leaves fall;

FALL RANDOM - Leaves fall from time to time, here and there.

In ASL, your child repeats Wh- word at beginning and end of question (e.g., WHERE GO WHERE?). This is called WH-bracketing.

In ASL, your child uses the AGENT sign (e.g., FARM-ER; TEACH-ER).

In ASL, your child uses topic continuation (holds a sign with one hand and continues signing with the other).

In ASL, your child uses body shift and eye-gaze.



Four - Five Years of Age

Expressive Language

Notes:

Receptive Language

- Your child understands most of what is said or signed at home and in school.
- Your child pays attention to short stories.
- Your child enjoys stories and can understand simple questions.
- Your child carries out four simple related commands in order.
- Your child understands things that are similar (e.g., things that fly, things you eat, things you wear).
- Your child understands time concepts (e.g., day/night) and seasons of the year.
- Your child understands words that rhyme.
- Your child points to or places object before, after, above, below when asked.

Notes:

Vocabulary

- Your child uses 2,500+ words and/or signs.
- Your child begins to ask the meanings of words and signs.
- Your child uses describing words (e.g., hard, soft, yucky).
- Your child puts sequencing concepts together (smallest to largest; longest to shortest).
- Your child names categories (e.g., pizza, hamburgers as food).

Notes:

¹Adapted and used with permission from the Language Development Milestones that was developed by the California SB 210 committee for children who are Deaf or hard of hearing, birth to five years of age.

