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## **Normal Development of Receptive Language**

### **What is language?**

Language is a system of symbols people use to communicate with each other. It is one way to receive and give information.

### **What is receptive language?**

Receptive language is the input system of language. It is what we see, hear and the information that we take in. Receptive language is the comprehension of this information.

Language does not improve according to age alone; it develops as one skill helps the next. Once an early skill develops, it allows more difficult skills to be learned. Receptive language skills begin as early as birth and get stronger during each stage in development.

### **Normal sequence of receptive language**

A newborn baby responds to sound; loud or sudden sounds startle the baby. Within weeks, the baby can tell the difference between happy and angry voices. This is seen when the baby coos in response to a pleasant voice. Auditory perception – when the baby associates meaning with a sound source, is now developing. At 6 months, a baby looks around to find the source of a sound. At 9 months, the baby responds to "no." A 1-year-old can follow simple directions.

### **How can I help my child?**

Language stimulation can be fun! You can do language training during your daily routine, but never insist on working if your child resists it. Pick times when your child is eager to work, such as bath time or story time. Each time you stimulate language in a daily activity, you help your child learn. The quality of time you spend with your child is more important than the quantity.

Adapted from by Nancy Williams, M.S. CCC-SLP (2003).