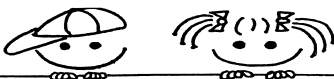




# Parenting Corner: *Vision, Speech & Hearing*



IUSD Early Childhood Learning Center  
Early Start • Head Start • Montessori International • School Readiness • Special Education Preschool  
(949) 936-5870



## Speech and Language

The most intensive period of speech and language development is in the first 3 years of life. These skills develop best when the child is in an environment rich in sounds, sights, and consistent exposure to the speech and language of others. There is increasing evidence suggesting that there are "critical periods" for this type of development in young children. This means that the developing brain is best able to absorb language during this period, and that language will be more difficult and perhaps less efficient if these critical periods are allowed to pass without early exposure.

(Nat. Institute of Health, 2001)

### Helpful Hints

Many preschools are frightened at doctor appointments. To help relieve your child's anxiety explain exactly what is going to happen during the visit. This will make your child feel more confident that s/he knows what to expect.

## Fast Facts

**More than 85% of America's 20 million children age 5 and under have never had an eye exam, according to the College of Optometrists in Vision Development.**

## Early Warning Signs: Hearing

All children develop at different rates and in different ways. Some children are born with special needs, others may not show developmental problems, delays or difficulties until later in childhood. Here are only a few of the indicators that a child may need further observation and assessment of their hearing :

- Has frequent earaches.
- Has many ear, nose, or throat infections or allergies.
- By four months, does not look at the source of sounds or voices or react to loud noises.
- Talks in a very loud or very soft voice.
- Seems to have difficulty responding when called from across the room, even when it is for something interesting.
- Turns body so that the same ear is always turned toward a sound.
- Breathes through mouth.
- Has difficulty understanding what is said.



## **Your Child's Vision** Vision experts recommend that parents schedule eye exams for their children at three important points during their early development:

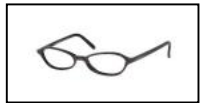
- **When the infant is about 6 months old.** This exam should be performed by an optometrist who specializes in treating young children or by a pediatric ophthalmologist. During this initial check, the doctor makes sure the eyes are working well together and that they're free of rarely occurring but significant defects – such as cataracts and tumors - that could threaten the child's vision.
- **Between the ages of 2 and 3, before the child enters preschool.** During this eye exam, the doctor looks for signs of developmental disorders, including "lazy eye", crossed eyes (strabismus), nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism – which trigger difficulties in focusing. If the doctor finds an irregularity, effective therapies can usually begin immediately.
- **Before the child enters kindergarten.** At this point, the eye doctor tests for sharpness of vision and corrects deficiencies by prescribing glasses.



**The great thing is that doctors can usually start correcting the problem before it significantly interferes with the child's eyesight, learning and development.**

(Orange County Dep. of Education, 1999 and VSP, 2005)

# Story Time



**Froggy Goes to the Doctor**, written by Jonathan London. Froggy is his usual out-of-control self in Dr. Mugwort's office but he quickly realizes his visit won't be too bad, might be fun, and could even involve a gold star or a lollipop!

**Chuckie Visits the Eye Doctor**, written by Luke David and illustrated by Barry Goldberg. With a little help from Tommy and a lot of help from Dr. Pedop, fans can find out how Chuckie got his first pair of glasses.

**Libbys New Glasses**, written by Tricia Tusa. Libby can't accept the idea of wearing glasses until she meets a lovely bird with the same problem.

**The Listening Walk**, written by Paul Shower and illustrated by Alikia. A father and his child take a walk together and listen to the sounds all around them.

**You Can't Smell a Flower With Your Ear!**, written and illustrated by Joanna Cole and Mavis Smith. This simple science book provides diagrams of the eye, ear, nose, and tongue, and explanations about how we use our five senses.

## Stages of Speech and Language Development

<p><b>18-24 Months</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ increase in sentence length (1-2 words)</li> <li>✓ understands 2 word directions - "push car"</li> <li>✓ 200 words at 24 months</li> <li>✓ 25-50% of speech understood by strangers</li> </ul>	<p><b>4-5 Years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ sentences are almost grammatically complete</li> <li>✓ can carry out complex commands containing 2-3 related activities</li> <li>✓ speech understood 100% of the time by unfamiliar adults</li> </ul>
<p><b>2-3 Years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ dramatic growth in sentence length and vocabulary (2-3 words)</li> <li>✓ understands 3-4 word directions- " put book on table"</li> <li>✓ 65% -80% of speech readily understood by unfamiliar adults</li> <li>✓ understands questions using yes/no, what, who, whose, where</li> </ul>	<p><b>5-6 Years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ able to define simple words</li> <li>✓ engages in responsive and elaborative conversation</li> <li>✓ tells stories correctly and in sequence</li> <li>✓ master of basic grammar rules</li> <li>✓ 2,000 word vocabulary</li> <li>✓ engages in role playing with peers</li> </ul>
<p><b>3-4 Years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ able to follow 2-part directions, example- "pick up the ball and throw it to me"</li> <li>✓ 3-5 word sentences</li> <li>✓ asks where, how and who questions</li> <li>✓ Speech is clear 80-90% of the time to unfamiliar adults</li> </ul>	<p><b>6 Years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ uses every form of sentence structure</li> <li>✓ developing sound/letter recognition required for reading/ writing</li> <li>✓ describes events in correct sequence</li> <li>✓ communicates easily with friends</li> <li>✓ can control speech volume</li> <li>✓ speaks in complete sentences</li> </ul> <p>(Newport Lang., Speech &amp; Audiology Center)</p>

## Helpful Resources

If you would like more information regarding children's vision, speech and hearing please visit these useful web-sites or contact the IUSD School Readiness Program at (949) 936-5870.

American Academy of Pediatrics:

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

and

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:

[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

For more information on the IUSD School Readiness Program visit: [www.iusd.k12.ca.us/curriculum/ece/EarlyChildEd.htm](http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/curriculum/ece/EarlyChildEd.htm).

## Time Together: Listening Walk

Taking a walk is a fun way to get some much needed exercise and fresh air. Make this a little more interesting for your "little one" by listening to the sounds around you. To help focus children's attention on sounds before your walk, ask a few open-ended questions such as, "What kind of sounds do you think we will hear?", "How can we make sure we hear everything?", and "Where should we go to hear lots of sounds?" As you walk, encourage children to tell you about the sounds they hear. Help them to use descriptive words such as loud, soft, banging, roaring, ringing, etc. After the walk, sit together and talk about the sounds you heard. Invite children to try to re-create the sound using only their voices. You might want to record them on a tape recorder to play back and try to identify at another time.

