4 to 5 Years: What to Expect

Speech and language milestones for this age, plus the signs that are worth a call to a speech-language pathologist.



AGE
4-5 years

INTELLIGIBILITY
ASHA's wording: speech is understandable in conversation

What to expect

- Produces grammatically correct sentences, which are longer and more complex
- Tells stories with main characters and a setting, joined with words like "and"
- Uses at least one irregular plural form, like feet or men
- Understands and uses location words like behind, beside and between
- Uses time words like yesterday and tomorrow correctly
- Follows simple directions and rules to play games
- Locates the front of a book and its title
- Recognizes and names 10 or more letters, and can usually write their own name
- Imitates reading and writing from left to right
- Blends word parts - cup + cake = cupcake - and identifies some rhyming words like cat and hat
- Produces most consonants correctly

ASHA's wording: speech is understandable in conversation.

Worth a Conversation

- ! Still difficult for unfamiliar adults to understand
- ! Grammar errors a younger child would make
- ! Cannot tell a simple story with a beginning and an end
- ! Struggles to follow classroom directions

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You never need a referral to ask a speech-language pathologist for an evaluation, and you never need to wait and see. If you are wondering whether to call, that is reason enough.