Informal Speech and Language Screener: 3 years

A structured set of things to listen for at each age, drawn from this site's own word lists, worksheets and awareness tasks. Use it to decide whether a full evaluation is warranted.



READ THIS FIRST

Informal screening tool only. Not standardized, not normed, not diagnostic. This screener has no norms, no standard scores and no cut-offs, and it has not been validated against any standardized measure. It cannot diagnose a speech or language disorder and it cannot rule one out. It is a prompt for clinical judgment: a structured way to listen to a child for ten minutes and decide whether a full evaluation is warranted. A child who sails through it can still have a disorder, and a child who struggles with it may simply be tired, shy, or unfamiliar with the examiner. Nothing here substitutes for a comprehensive assessment by a certified speech-language pathologist.

3 years

INFORMAL SCREENING ONLY

Child: _____ Date: _____ Age: _____

What to expect: Three-word sentences, several hundred words, and roughly three-quarters of speech understood by an unfamiliar listener.

Speech sounds 18 WORDS

T Sound /t/



top



toe

K Sound /k/



cat



cup

G Sound /g/



girl



game

NG Sound /ng/	 singer	 finger	☐ ☐ —
F Sound /f/	 fish	 fan	☐ ☐ —
Y Sound /j/	 yarn	 yard	☐ ☐ —
P Sound /p/	 pig	 pan	☐ ☐ —
B Sound /b/	 ball	 bat	☐ ☐ —
M Sound /m/	 man	 moon	☐ ☐ —

Language 12 ITEMS

Past Tense Verbs



Today I walk to school. Yesterday I ____ to school. (walk) (walked)



Today I jump on the bed. Yesterday I ____ on the bed. (jump) (jumped)



Today I play with my blocks. Yesterday I ____ with my blocks. (play) (played)

Prepositions


The cat is sleeping ____ the sofa. (on)


The two children are ____ the blanket fort. (in)


The crayons are ____ the rug. (on)

WH-Questions


Who ate the cookie? (a person)


Where did you put the ball? (a place)


When is your birthday? (a time)

Subject Pronouns


My brother is on the swing. ____ is swinging high. (He)


Mom is in the kitchen. ____ is making lunch. (She)


The twins are at the park. ____ are playing tag. (They)

Language from a picture: At the park

Put this picture in front of the child. Every question below is about it, and the same picture gives you the speech sample for fluency.



UNDERSTANDING - the child points or answers briefly

- Who is flying the kite? (points to the boy with the kite)
- Where is the cat? (under the bench)
- What is the dog doing? (jumping, or catching the frisbee)

TALKING - the child produces the language

- Tell me what the girl on the swing is doing. ("she is swinging" - listen for the -ing)
- How many ducks can you see? (counts, or says "lots of ducks" - listen for the plural)
- Tell me about the girl on the bike. (three or four words together)

Following directions

Two ordinary things on the table - a cup and a ball. Read each direction once, all the way through, before the child moves. Two related steps is what to expect at this age.

- [ ] Pick up the ball and put it in the cup. (both, in order)
- [ ] Give me the cup and then sit down. (both, in order)
- [ ] Put the ball under the chair. (ball under the chair)

Phonological awareness: Rhyme recognition

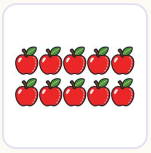
Say two words and ask whether they rhyme. Recognition comes well before production at this age, so accept a yes/no rather than expecting the child to generate a rhyme.



-op: top, drop, pop, chop



toe: toe, though, blow, grow



-en: ten, when, then, men



-oy: toy, boy, joy

Also listen for

- [ ] Are sentences three words or longer, at least some of the time?
- [ ] Can they answer simple what and where questions about the here and now?
- [ ] Does /k/ or /g/ come out as /t/ or /d/ (fronting)? This is still common but should be resolving.
- [ ] Are word endings present, or falling off ("cu" for "cup")?



CONSIDER REFERRING FOR FULL EVALUATION IF

Speech an unfamiliar listener finds mostly unintelligible, no sentences beyond two words, no answers to simple WH-questions, or final consonants missing across the board. This is a prompt for clinical judgement, not a cut-off score - there are no norms behind it.

NOTES