

0 to 5 years old

Language Development
Screening Tool



Centre intégré
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de la Capitale-Nationale

Québec 

How to use the Language Development Screening Tool?

A

Complete the section that corresponds to the child's **age**. Please take into consideration that these sections are designed for **monolingual English-speaking** children and may not be suitable for children from another culture or who are learning multiple languages. See the information below for more details.

B

If you answered "no" to multiple statements or if there are **red flags** (pink section), your child may have language difficulties. Talk to an **early childhood professional** in your community (e.g., educator, teacher, etc.) or contact your local health care facility to make a request for **speech therapy**.

C

Be aware that the Language Development Screening Tool allows you to track observations related to monitoring language development but does not determine the type or severity of language difficulty, let alone provide diagnostic conclusions. It must be interpreted carefully.

Bilingual Children

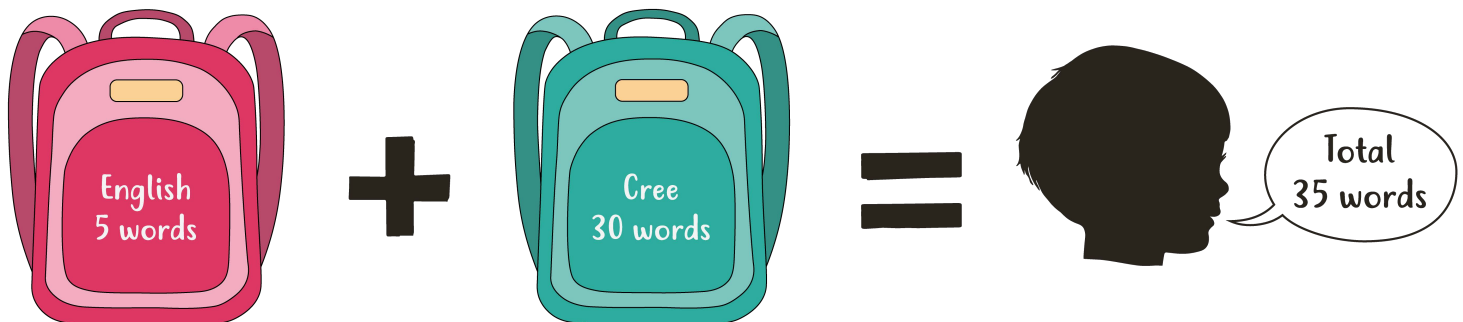
For bilingual children, you can check whether the child is doing what is expected for their age in at least one language.

Regarding the number of words used by the child, add up the words that the child uses in all the languages they speak.

Indigenous Children

Little is known about the typical language development of Indigenous children. Data shows that some Indigenous children could be six months behind what is expected in this English Language Development Screening Tool. This gap could be linked to Indigenous learning styles/methods and the specificities of some Indigenous languages. However, it should be resolved by school age.

In order to give your child the best chance, do not wait to consult a specialist or intervene if you are worried. A speech therapist will discuss with parents/guardians and members of the community to make appropriate recommendations.



Important: If some elements are not right for your language/culture, it would be preferable to ignore them (e.g., eye contact).

0 to 6 months old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I react to loud noises.	Yes	No
I calm down when I hear a familiar voice or when my needs are met.	Yes	No
I can tell the difference between angry and friendly voices and facial expressions.	Yes	No
I seem interested in people and look for the person who is talking to me.	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

3

I cry, shout, and/or move my body to communicate my needs (hunger, fatigue, discomfort, pleasure).	Yes	No
I maintain eye contact.	Yes	No
I babble, I answer with sounds, a smile, or by making eye contact when someone talks to me.	Yes	No
I express my feelings through my tone.	Yes	No

RED FLAGS

We refer to **audiology** if the baby...

...doesn't react to loud noises, a parent's voice, or the sound of toys.	Yes	No
...is passive: doesn't smile or react when you take care of them.	Yes	No
...is silent: doesn't babble or vocalize.	Yes	No



6 to 12 months old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I notice music and noises.	Yes	No
I keep my attention on the person who is talking to me.	Yes	No
I am starting to recognize my name.	Yes	No
I understand some instructions accompanied by gestures (e.g., "Come here." and "Give me a kiss.").	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

4

I babble, I attempt different noises with my mouth.	Yes	No
I shout or vocalize while playing or to get attention.	Yes	No
I babble more and more by producing series of syllables (e.g., "bababa", followed by "patapata").	Yes	No
I imitate some familiar gestures such as waving goodbye.	Yes	No
I stretch out my arms to be picked up.	Yes	No

RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...doesn't babble (doesn't produce any repetitive syllable, e.g., "baba").	Yes	No
...isn't looking to imitate facial expressions, tones, or sounds.	Yes	No
...doesn't look at the person who is talking to them.	Yes	No
...shows little interest in family members, or people around them (e.g., looks, smiles, vocalizations).	Yes	No



12 months old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I turn and face a noise or a voice I hear.	Yes	No
I look at the person who is talking to me, I pay attention.	Yes	No
I turn around when someone calls my name.	Yes	No
I understand "no", "give", "again".	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

5

I enjoy playing with someone (e.g., peek-a-boo).	Yes	No
I use simple gestures to communicate (e.g., I ask for what I want by stretching out my arms.).	Yes	No
I seek attention by making sounds or saying a word.	Yes	No
I say "daddy, mommy" or other familiar words, pronounced in my own way.	Yes	No
I make animal sounds and other sounds from language (e.g., "Boom! Yahoo! Knock knock knock").	Yes	No
I'm starting to have "conversations" by babbling.	Yes	No

RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...doesn't react to noises, voices, or their name being called.	Yes	No
...shows little interest in their family, in the people around them, preferring to play alone.	Yes	No
...tends not to look, smile, or vocalize when spoken to.	Yes	No



18 months old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I understand simple instructions such as "Come eat", "Sit down", "Go get..."	Yes	No
I understand concepts such as "done", "gone", "inside".	Yes	No
I understand several words: known objects, simple actions (e.g., running, going to sleep).	Yes	No
I can point to a few body parts (about 3 to 6) upon request.	Yes	No
I recognize my family members' names and can point to the right person.	Yes	No
I may sometimes still need gestures to understand some instructions.	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

I express myself using single words, sometimes with two-word combinations (e.g., "More milk.").	Yes	No
I use about 50 words (not always clear).	Yes	No
I say "again", even if this word might be pronounced incorrectly.	Yes	No
I point to what I see, what I want.	Yes	No
I use the sounds "p, b, m, t, d, n" and vowels.	Yes	No
I do simple gestures (e.g., no, bravo, bye-bye).	Yes	No

6

RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...does not react to their name being called.	Yes	No
...does not try to imitate the adult's words and gestures.	Yes	No
...does not point or use gestures to communicate (e.g., bye-bye).	Yes	No
...uses less than 14 words*.	Yes	No

* All spoken words, even if they are mispronounced or difficult to understand



2 years old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I recognize several words and point to several objects from my everyday life.	Yes	No
I learn new words quickly.	Yes	No
I can point 5 to 10 body parts upon request (e.g., hands, nose, ears, feet, hair).	Yes	No
I understand the questions "where?", "who?", "what?".	Yes	No
I understand that I must choose when I am asked a question with options (e.g., "Do you want an apple or a banana?").	Yes	No
I understand simple questions (e.g., "What is your name?").	Yes	No
I play make-believe (e.g., feeding a doll).	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

7

I like repeating words to learn them.	Yes	No
I express myself in two- or three-word sentences (e.g., "Little cat gone.").	Yes	No
I use more than 100 words (names of objects, people, or actions).	Yes	No
I refer to myself by using my name.	Yes	No
I ask questions (e.g., "Who that?"; "What that?").	Yes	No
I use words to get attention, to name things, to ask for things or help, and to protest (e.g., "No, not").	Yes	No

RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...uses less than 50 words*. <i>* All words produced must be considered, even if they are mispronounced.</i>	Yes	No
...does not make 2-word sentences (e.g., "Car falling.").	Yes	No
...express themselves mostly by gestures.	Yes	No
...does not understand simple everyday instructions (e.g., "Go wash your hands.").	Yes	No



2 ½ years old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I understand the concepts “big/small”, “up/down”, “in”.	Yes	No
I understand simple routine instructions (e.g., “Go wash your hands, put on your coat.”).	Yes	No
I recognize pictures of familiar objects.	Yes	No
I can tell the difference between boys and girls.	Yes	No
I understand the question “What is he doing?”	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

I express myself with three- or four-word sentences by using different action verbs (eating, sleeping...).	Yes	No
I use small words (one, from, for, with...) and adjectives (pretty, soft...) in my sentences.	Yes	No
I refer to myself by using “me” and to others with “you.”	Yes	No
I express my preferences and my needs, I talk about what I can see and what I am doing.	Yes	No
I start a conversation and continue it.	Yes	No

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RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...does not learn new words quickly.	Yes	No
...does not make small 2-3-word sentences.	Yes	No
...uses mostly gestures, noises, or gibberish* to communicate. <i>*Gibberish: The child strings together sounds that appear to be language, though no words can be recognized (e.g., “Ra to poka ti badoum?”).</i>	Yes	No
...does not understand simple everyday instructions (e.g., “Put on your coat.”).	Yes	No



3 years old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I understand the concepts of "above, below, sometimes."	Yes	No
I understand simple instructions, without gestures to help me.	Yes	No
I understand the questions "With who?" or "With what?" (e.g., "Who did you play with today?").	Yes	No
I understand "How much?" and "Why?" (Around 3 ½ years old).	Yes	No
I understand well enough to engage in a simple conversation (e.g., talk about a day at the park).	Yes	No
I understand two-step instructions (e.g., "Put on your slippers and go sit in the living room.").	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

I express myself with short, simple sentences (e.g., "The rabbit eats carrots.").	Yes	No
I use "I," "you" and small words like "my," and "your."	Yes	No
I am understood by strangers 75% of the time or more.	Yes	No
I use the feminine pronoun "she" (e.g., "She puts on her boots.", around 3 ½ years old).	Yes	No
I use the "f, v, s, z, k, g, l" sounds.	Yes	No
I use verbs in the present tense (at age 3), but also in past and future tenses (at about age 3 ½, e.g., "Mommy saw the dog."; "He will eat at the restaurant.").	Yes	No
I often ask "why?"	Yes	No

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RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...does not regularly form sentences of 3 or more words.	Yes	No
...is only understood by their parents.	Yes	No
...fails to follow a less familiar instruction or answer a simple question (e.g., "Give me the little horse; What's your name?").	Yes	No
...hesitates or stutters while talking (e.g., "I, I, I... I like that.").	Yes	No



4 years old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I understand well "Why," "When" and "How many" questions.	Yes	No
I understand longer instructions (e.g., "Put the book, the blocks, and the stuffed toy away in the box.").	Yes	No
I understand concepts of time (day, night, after) and space (in front of, behind, beside).	Yes	No
I know different colours.	Yes	No

EXPRESSION skills

10

I express myself with longer sentences (e.g., because..., if..., when...) even if I still make some mistakes (e.g., "He go the park;" "My friend dranked juice.").	Yes	No
I am well understood by strangers, despite occasional mistakes.	Yes	No
I express my ideas; I ask questions and I make a lot of comments.	Yes	No
I can tell a story, an event, or explain something simple.	Yes	No
I pronounce well, but I can make mistakes with "ch, j, r, th" or with double consonants such as "gr, tr, sp" (e.g., says "pider" instead of spider).	Yes	No

RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...does not use a lot of "function words" in sentences (e.g., I, he, she, one, to, of).	Yes	No
... replaces some sounds with others (e.g., fast / sast, cow / tow). <i>* Pronunciation mistakes are still normal for the sounds "ch, j, r, th" and double consonants "gr, tr, sp" (e.g., says "pider" instead of spider).</i>	Yes	No
...is hardly understood by strangers.	Yes	No
...has difficulty maintaining a conversation and staying on topic.	Yes	No
...has difficulty understanding long instructions and concepts of space.	Yes	No
...hesitates or stutters while talking (e.g., "I saw a b-b-b-beaver").	Yes	No



5 years old

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SCREENING TOOL

Name of the child: _____

Date of birth: _____ File # (if applicable): _____

Name of the healthcare professional (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



COMPREHENSION skills

I understand all questions, including "How?" (e.g., "How do we make a snowman?").	Yes	No
I know concepts such as "same/different, before/after, first/last".	Yes	No
I understand concepts of time (morning, afternoon, evening) and space (in the middle, around).	Yes	No
I can follow complex instructions with a few steps (e.g., "Finish your drawing, then put the caps on before putting the markers away.").	Yes	No
I can make logical connections, deductions (e.g., "I guess it is a chocolate cake because it's brown.").	Yes	No
I start to understand simple jokes.	Yes	No
I can play a simple board game. (e.g., Snakes and ladders) and follow the rules.	Yes	No



EXPRESSION skills

11

I express myself with longer and more complex sentences (e.g., "I think they will run away because they are afraid.").	Yes	No
I pronounce well, but I can make mistakes with "ch, j, th" or with double consonants "gr, tr, sp" (e.g., says "pider" instead of spider).	Yes	No
I can tell a story or recount an event.	Yes	No
When I express myself, my ideas are well organized.	Yes	No

RED FLAGS

We refer to **speech therapy** if the child...

...makes a lot of mistakes in sentences.	Yes	No
...is hardly understood by strangers.	Yes	No
...has difficulty keeping a conversation on topic, goes from one subject to another.	Yes	No
...has difficulty understanding instructions and explanations in a group setting.	Yes	No
...is not able to tell you about their day.	Yes	No
...hesitates or stutters while talking (e.g., "a b-b-beaver").	Yes	No

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