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Speech and Language Milestones

4-5 Years

Comprehension (Child's Understanding of Spoken Language)

- Pays attention to a short story and answers questions about them
- Understands most adult conversations overheard at school and at home
- Understands spatial concepts (e.g., behind, next to)
- Understands why questions
- Understands words for order (e.g., first, second, third, next, last)

Production (Child's Verbal Language Skills)

- Uses irregular past tense verbs accurately (e.g., ran, went, fell)
- Describes how to do things (e.g., painting a picture)
- May have some difficulty saying long and complex words clearly (e.g., tyrannosaurus)
- Lists 5-8 items within a familiar category (e.g., animals, vehicles)
- Names letters and numbers
- Changes the way they talk based on who the communication partner is (e.g., peer vs. adult)
- Joins sentences using words such as "and" or "but"

Red Flags

- Does not engage in role play games
- Many speech sound errors that make them difficult to understand
- Gets frustrated when not understood
- Does not engage in conversation turn taking

****If your child does not meet most of these milestones by 5 years old, consider scheduling a speech-language evaluation.*