

Expressive Language

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE MEANS TALKING

Forming Sentences

Grammar

Vocabulary

USES OF EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

We expect children to develop the ability to use language for a purpose, including:

- Asking for something - Can I have a biscuit?
- Giving directions, directing others – Sit down over there
- Interacting and conversing with others socially – What did you do on the weekend?
- Expressing a state of mind or feelings about something – I think chocolate is my favourite food.
- Inquiry, Finding out information – Do you know how much this is?
- Telling stories and role-play – You be the prince and I'll be the princess
- Providing an organised description of an event or object

Expressive Language

MLU

MLU refers to 'Mean Length of Utterance.' An utterance is essentially a sentence, and so the MLU is the **average sentence length** when you consider all of the sentences that a child says (some short, some long!) The sentence length indicated on the pages that follow is the sentence length measured in **number of words** in the utterance. This is a common spoken language measure that Speech Pathologists use.

Second Language Learners

Many children may be learning multiple languages at home. It is great for children to **learn multiple languages from birth** as it sets them up with a good foundation of sounds and vocabulary when their brains are absorbing so much information. Speech Pathologists are not language teachers, however some children demonstrate difficulty in developing their expressive language skills in their primary language, which highlights a need for Speech Pathology services.

See the following pages for the
development of expressive language
for children aged 0-8

Expressive Language

- Uses between 5-20 words with meaning, even if not pronounced correctly
- Takes turn making sounds
- Makes requests e.g. 'more' and combines with actions e.g. pointing
- Protests "no!" and combines with shaking head.
- Copies simple words and sounds e.g. 'woof'
- Uses one word for many situations e.g. 'apple' for all types of fruit
- Mostly uses single word sentences

By
18
months

MLU: 1.31

- Uses between 50-200 words (and understands 500)
- Begins joining two words together e.g. 'more juice'
- Typically sentences have similar patterns e.g. Noun+Verb – "Mummy go" or Noun+Verb+Noun – "Doggy ate bone"
- Begins to describe objects e.g. 'big teddy'
- Starts to ask or comment about things that have happened or will happen e.g. 'daddy work' 'home after'
- Uses -ing e.g. planting
- Uses plural 's' e.g. cats

By
2
years

MLU: 1.92

Expressive Language

Produces approximately 500 words (comprehends approx. 900)

Uses words as the main means of communicating (with some pointing and gesture)

Quickly learns new words in familiar contexts

Different types of sentences are used – yes/no questions, wh- questions (who, what, where, why), negatives (stop that!)

Uses compound sentences with 'and'

Complex sentences begin to emerge e.g. "This is the one I made"

Enjoys reading and telling stories to others.

Uses prepositions 'in' and 'on'

Uses possessive 's' e.g. "Mummy's balloon"



MLU: 3.43

Produces approximately 1000-1500 words

Combines 4-7 words in sentences

Starts to use longer sentences with conjunctions e.g. "I am tired because I went to school today"

Tells 'news' with some support

Tells a long story and retells a story

Sings songs

Uses pronouns consistently

Uses regular third person –s e.g. Sarah skips.

Uses regular past tense –ed, e.g. jumped

Uses irregular past tense e.g. 'ran'

Uses articles (a, the, an)

Uses the verb 'be' (e.g. she is, I am)

Uses irregular third person "She did it"

Uses 'and, and then, because, but'



MLU: 4.10

Expressive Language

Produces approximately 1500-2000 words

Combines 5-8 words in sentences

Explores how language is used differently at home and school

Understands that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes.

Tells news or stories without any assistance

Retells a story accurately

Participates in long detailed conversations with a range of people

Explains why something happened

Uses terms such as this, that, here, there.



MLU: 4.38

Understands that language is used as well as other means of communication e.g. facial expressions and gestures

Explores different ways of expressing emotions including verbal, visual, body language and facial expression.

Engages in conversations and discussions, using active listening behaviours, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions.

Asks complex questions to find out information

Provides detailed answers to questions

Explains reasons for things happening

Retells a story without adult prompting

Independently generates ideas and sentences for written tasks.

Uses spoken language with few grammatical errors



MLU: 4.57

Expressive Language

Uses the adult-like order of adjectives in sentences

Adds significantly more descriptive language to sentences and stories.

Begins to accurately define words with longer sentences

Understands that language varies when people take on different roles

Identifies the language that can be used for appreciating the qualities of people and things.

Provides very detailed answers to questions about things they have done.

Easily explains reasons for things happening

Tells event-based news which is clear and detailed.

Uses suffixes such as -er, -y and -ly



MLU: 4.72

Understands that successful cooperation with others depends on shared use of social conventions

Provides information about what they have done, what they have learnt and what they would like

Explains complex ideas to others so that they understand what is meant

Uses very little non specific language (e.g. thing, that)

Uses complex conjunctions such as 'so' and 'if'



MLU: 5.08