

# When Should I Ask About a Speech or OT Evaluation?

A parent's milestones checklist from Therapy Clubhouse • Westlake Village, CA  
Check any box that sounds like your child. A few checks does not mean something is wrong — it means it is worth a conversation.

## By 18 months

- Says fewer than 10–20 words, or has stopped using words they once had
- Doesn't point, wave, or use gestures to communicate
- Doesn't respond consistently to their name
- Struggles to pick up small foods or objects with finger and thumb
- Strong reactions to textures, sounds, or being touched/dressed

## By age 2

- Says fewer than 50 words, or isn't combining two words (“more milk”)
- Family understands less than half of what they say
- Frustration, meltdowns, or giving up when trying to communicate
- Not yet using a spoon, stacking blocks, or scribbling
- Avoids playground equipment, swings, or messy play — or seeks crashing constantly

## By age 3

- Strangers understand less than about 75% of their speech
- Speaks mostly in single words rather than short sentences
- Repeats sounds or words with visible tension or frustration
- Trouble with utensils, large buttons, or simple puzzles
- Transitions and routine changes regularly end in distress

## Ages 4–5

- Hard to understand, or leaves off / swaps many sounds
- Difficulty following two-step directions or answering simple questions
- Avoids coloring, cutting, and drawing; grip looks awkward or fisted
- Can't manage dressing tasks like zippers and buttons most days
- Big reactions to noise, clothing textures, grooming, or busy places

## School age

- Speech sounds (R, S, L, TH) still hard for others to understand
- Stuttering that persists, increases, or makes them avoid talking
- Messy, slow, or exhausting handwriting compared to classmates
- Trouble making or keeping friends; conversations feel one-sided
- Teacher has raised concerns about attention, regulation, or participation

### Checked a few boxes? Here's what to do next.

1. Call us for a **free 15-minute consultation** — no commitment, just a conversation.
2. If it makes sense, schedule a play-based evaluation in your home or via telehealth.
3. Children under 3 may qualify for **no-cost Early Start services** through Tri-Counties Regional Center — we are a TCRC provider and can guide you.

**Therapy Clubhouse** • (805) 702-3427 • [info@therapyclubhouse.com](mailto:info@therapyclubhouse.com) • [therapyclubhouse.com](http://therapyclubhouse.com)  
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This checklist is for awareness, not diagnosis. Every child develops at their own pace — when in doubt, ask.