

## Is My Child's Grammar Developing Normally?

As children develop their grammar (how they put their sentences together), it is normal for them to make small errors on their way. For example "Me goed to the park." When do these errors go from being cute to being troublesome? When should you be concerned that your child is still using particular errors?

Research has identified that certain parts of grammar should be in place by certain ages.

By two years of age the majority of children are using what is known as "telegraphic speech" – where children use just the important words in their sentences and leave out the small words such as "a" & "and". For example, "Daddy go train". At two years of age, children also ask questions with a rising tone, for example "milk?"

By two and a half years, children begin to use "wh" questions, for example "what this?" & "where going". They also begin to use location words such as "in" or "on", pronouns (for example "I" & "me"), they put common endings on verbs (for example "jumping"), they start to use plurals (for example "carss") and possessives ("mummy's hat") and they start to use small words ("a", "and" & "the").

By three years of age, children should be using 3-5 word sentences, asking "why", "who" and "how" questions and using more complex negative words such as "can't" and "don't". They should begin to use other pronouns ("my" & "it"), joining words (e.g "and" & "but") and start to join sentences together with "...and...and...and..."

By four years of age, children's grammar continues to increase in sophistication and sound more like adult's language. Children's length of sentences should be five or more words in length. They should be using past tense forms on their verbs (for example "jumped", "played"), using more complex joining words (such as "if" & "because") and more complex negative words (such as "shouldn't" & "wasn't").

By 5 years of age children are using joining words (such as "so" & "when") and are able to tell their own stories and jokes!

If you have any concerns about your child's grammatical development, an assessment by a speech and language pathologist is suggested. Speech and language pathologists are specialized in the diagnosis and treatment of difficulties in grammatical development, as well as other aspects of language.