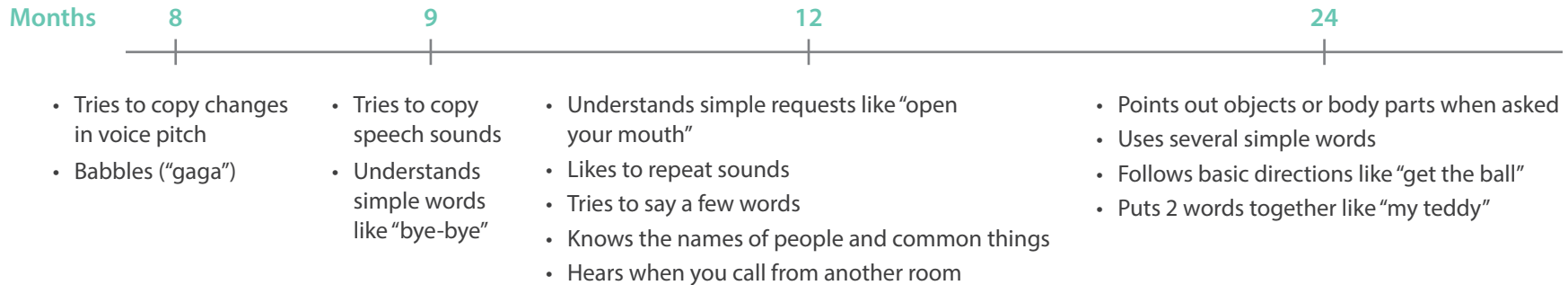


Looking After Your Toddler's Hearing

Hearing plays a key role in your toddler's speech and language development and social and emotional growth.

How Hearing Typically Develops

Remember – all children develop at their own pace.



Keeping Hearing Healthy

Check hearing early and often

Your baby's hearing will be checked at birth, either in hospital or at a public health office. Have your child checked again anytime you have concerns. When hearing loss is caught early, more can be done to help.

Protect his ears

- Clean only the outer ear with a clean cloth. Don't use cotton swabs or put anything inside the ear.
- Keep music and TV volumes low.
- Have your toddler wear ear protection if he's around a lot of noise, like loud music or fireworks. Don't give him earplugs, which he can choke on.
- Have him immunized. (See [Preventing Sickness](#))

Reduce ear infections

Frequent ear infections can damage hearing. You can help your toddler avoid infections by:

- breastfeeding (see [Breastfeeding Your Toddler](#))
- not putting him to bed with a bottle
- keeping him away from second-hand smoke



MONEY SENSE

If you get premium assistance through the Medical Services Plan (MSP) – or if, as of January 2020, you get supplemental services – your child may be eligible for the Healthy Kids program. This can help with the cost of hearing aids. See [Dental Care, Vision and Hearing in the Resources](#) chapter for more information.



WARNING SIGNS

Your toddler could be at risk of developing hearing problems if he has:

- fluid or a bad smell coming from his ear
- pain in the ear
- redness around the ear
- wax blockage or an object in the ear

He may already have hearing problems if he:

- talks very loudly or softly
- doesn't respond when called
- always turns the same ear toward sounds
- has trouble understanding what you're saying (after 36 months)
- isn't startled by loud noises

If you have concerns, contact your health care provider or public health nurse, or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.