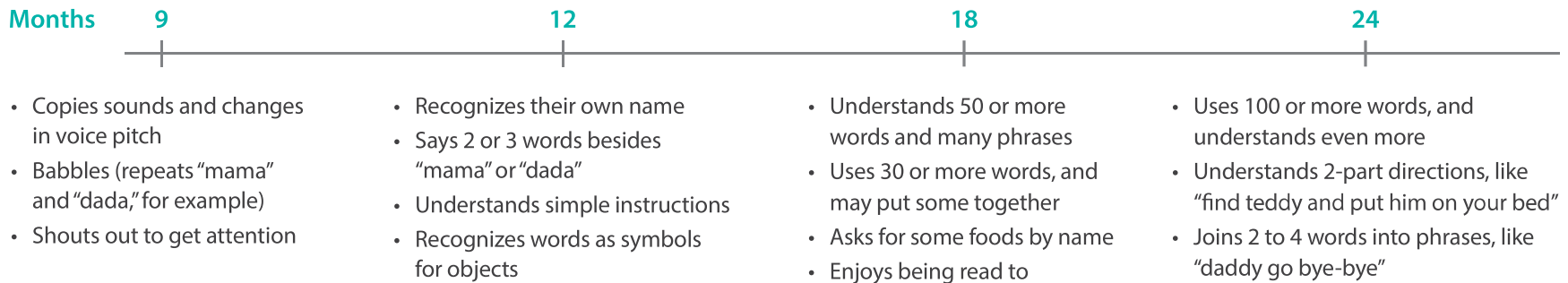


## Looking After Your Toddler's Hearing

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

Your baby's hearing will be checked at birth, following hospital discharge or at a public health hearing clinic through the BC Early Hearing Program.

Most children with permanent hearing loss are born healthy and have no family history of the problem. But hearing can change at any age, and children who develop hearing loss are at risk of speech and language delays. Have your child re-checked anytime you have concerns.

#### Protect your toddler's ears

- Clean only the outer ear with a clean cloth. Don't use cotton swabs like Q-Tips or put anything inside the ear.
- Avoid long exposure to loud noises, like fireworks and loud music.

- Have your child immunized. (See [Preventing Sickness](#))

#### Reduce ear infections

- Breastfeed or chestfeed. (See [Breastfeeding or Chestfeeding Your Toddler](#))
- Don't put your child to bed with a bottle.
- Keep your child away from second-hand smoke.



#### MONEY SENSE

Through the BC Early Hearing Program, all children under 5 with permanent hearing loss are eligible for free hearing aids. See [Hearing in the Resources](#) section for more information.



#### WARNING SIGNS

See your health care provider if your toddler has:

- fluid or a bad smell coming from their ear
- pain in the ear
- redness around the ear

Contact your local public health hearing clinic if your toddler:

- is responding to sound differently
- often says “what?”
- misunderstands simple directions
- isn't meeting the typical milestones shown above