Stages of Language Development
In utero, babies:

✓ hear the pitch and rhythm of the mother’s voice (but not individual words).

Image courtesy of summerbl4ck, flickr CC-BY-NC-ND: https://www.flickr.com/photos/summerbl4ck/
At Birth

Newborns:
✓ recognise their mother’s voice
✓ use the melody of language to find words in speech

Image courtesy of danna § curious tangles, flickr CC-BY-NC-ND: https://www.flickr.com/photos/curioustangles/
Newborns:

✓ Can discriminate very different languages (like English and Japanese) but not very similar languages (like English and German)
Babies:

✓ Watch your face when you talk to them.
✓ Smile and laugh when other people smile and laugh.
✓ Make sounds to themselves, like cooing, gurgling and babbling.

Image courtesy of Jeroen, Flickr [CC-BY: https://www.flickr.com/photos/jerroen/]
Babies

- Pay more attention to objects that are presented with language.
- Recognise their name and the names of familiar objects like ‘apple’ and ‘shoe’.

Image courtesy of Palmer House Photography, Flickr [CC BY-NC-ND]: https://www.flickr.com/photos/slinky789/
Babies

✓ Understand how your mouth matches the sounds you make.

✓ Can tell the difference between British English and American English.

Image courtesy of Palmer House Photography, Flickr CC BY-NC-ND: https://www.flickr.com/photos/slinky789/
Babies

✓ Listen carefully and turn to someone talking on the other side of the room.
✓ Babble strings of sounds, like ‘no-no’ and ‘go-go’.
✓ Understand that how you say words (happy or angry) means something.
9-12 months

Babies

✓ Make noises, point and look at you to get your attention.

✓ Show you objects to engage in conversation about the object.
Babies

✓ Take turns in conversations, babbling back to an adult.

✓ Start to understand the meaning of common verbs (e.g. dance, kiss)
12-18 months

Toddlers

✓ Use up to 20 simple words, like ‘cup’, ‘shoe’ and ‘daddy’.

✓ Understand simple instructions like ‘kiss mummy’, ‘kick ball’ and ‘give me’.
12-18 months

Toddlers

✓ Point to things when asked, like familiar people or objects.

✓ Start to enjoy simple pretend play, e.g. pretending to talk on the phone.

✓ Copy lots of the things that adults say and gestures they make.
18-24 months

Toddlers

✓ Understand between 200 and 500 words.

✓ Understand simple questions and instructions: ‘where’s your shoe?’ and ‘show me your belly button’.

Image courtesy of Charlie Brewer, Flickr [CC BY-NC-ND](https://www.flickr.com/photos/charliebrewer/)
18-24 months

Toddlers

- Use a limited number of sounds in their words—often these are p, b, t, d, m and w.
- Often miss the ends of words off.
18-24 months

Toddlers

✓ Sit and listen to simple stories with pictures.
✓ Start to put short 2-3 word sentences together: ‘bye nanny’, ‘more juice’.
For more information about ages and stages of language development, visit:

http://talkingpoint.org.uk/