Language Milestones – Normal Language Development
(Multiple errors across language domains or in single areas indicate child **may** need language assessment.)

Mark + or –
and any comments

By Age 5

Syntax (Sentence Structure)

_____ sentences in conversation should average 4.5-7 words
_____ simple sentences are complete
_____ uses and understands some complex sentences

Semantics (Word Knowledge)

_____ knows time concepts (early, tomorrow, etc.)
_____ labels common objects by use and function

Morphology (Word Structure)

_____ knows comparatives (e.g. bigger, nicer, taller)
      knows third person singular present tense
_____ (e.g. "he runs.")
_____ knows regular past tense
_____ knows regular plurals
      uses basic helping verbs in sentences
_____ (e.g. is, are, am)
_____ uses contractions (e.g. can't, won't, he's)

Pragmatics (Social Language)

      can judge grammatical correctness of
_____ basic sentences
_____ maintains topic

Suggestions for Eliciting Targets

Ask about favorite movies, friends,
siblings, pets, how to make a peanut butter
sandwich, favorite games, etc.

"What day is tomorrow? What did you do yesterday?"
"What tells time? What keeps food cold?"

"Is a car heavier than a bicycle?"
"What does a bird do with its wings?" or
"Use the word "walks" in a sentence."
After dropping pencil, ask "What did I do?"
Hold up fingers and ask, "What are these?"
"Use the word 'are' in a sentence."

"Do cows fly? Tell me that in a sentence."

"Is it correct to say, 'He drawing picture?'"

Elicit spontaneous speech.

Ages 5-6

Syntax (Sentence Structure)

_____ sentences averages 6.0-8.0 words
      uses and understands past and future tense consistently
_____ with usually complete and some complex sentences

Semantics (Word Knowledge)

      uses and understands many location
_____ prepositions (e.g. on top, above, between, near)
_____ knows address
_____ knows some common opposites (e.g. hard-soft)
_____ tells stories about past events
_____ defines basic words using use and composition
_____ can name position (e.g. first, second, third)

_____ knows indefinite pronouns (e.g. every, any, both, few)

Morphology (Word Structure)

_____ uses irregular plurals (e.g. mice, teeth)
_____ uses possessive nouns (e.g. the dog's tail)

_____ uses basic conjunctions (e.g. and, if, because)

Pragmatics (Social Language)

_____ uses basic requests (wh and yes-no questions)
_____ understands some indirect requests
_____ self monitors speech, sometimes self correcting errors

Elicit spontaneous speech. Ask about
what the student will do after school,
what happened yesterday after school, etc.

Place pencil in different areas (e.g. below
table), and ask, "Where is my pencil?"
"What town/state/country do you live in?"
"What is the opposite of stop?"
"What did you do (yesterday, last weekend, etc.)?"
"What is glue?" (Includes use and composition.)
"What is the third day of the week? What is
the last letter in the alphabet?"
"Use the word 'many' in a sentence."

Point to teeth or feet and ask "What are these?"
Point to picture of person, animal, etc. and ask,
"Whose ears, etc. are those?"
"Use the word 'or' in a sentence."

"What could you ask if you lost your coat?"
"I would like you to stand."
Elicit spontaneous speech.

Language Milestones – Normal Language Development

Ages 7,8, and 9

Mark + or -
and any
comments

Syntax
_____ sentences in conversation should average 7.0-9.0 words
_____ uses complete sentences
uses primarily complex sentences with conjunctions,
_____ clauses, and/or embedding
_____ uses correct word order (particularly in questions)

Semantics
knows seasons, and categories such as holidays, liquids,
_____ punctuation, planets, directions, states, etc.
_____ labels curriculum objects, and labels functions

_____ knows curriculum opposites and synonyms

_____ uses more complex location prepositions (eg. through)
_____ knows basic idioms

_____ knows basic metaphors

Morphology
_____ knows superlatives, e.g. biggest, best, tallest
_____ uses infinitive verbs
_____ knows irregular past tense

_____ knows derivational morphemes

_____ understands complex negation

Pragmatics
_____ varies intonation, gestures and other nonverbal behavior

Suggestions for Eliciting Targets
*Ask about favorite movies, friends,
siblings, how to do a book report,
hobbies, etc.
"Use the word 'unless' in a sentence."*

*"Name the seasons." "What are China,
Canada, and The United States of America?"
"Name something that measures." "What does a
title do?"
"What is the opposite of lower case?" "What is a
word that means the same as author?"
"Use the word 'across' in a sentence."
"What does it mean to 'catch up,' 'figure out,',"
call it a day,'"etc.
"Finish this sentence. That old dog was as slow
as a _____."*

*"Tell me the slowest animal that you can think of."
"Use the phrase "to walk" in a sentence."
"Use the word 'hold' in a sentence starting
with the word 'yesterday'."(hear, bring, etc.)
"If a reader is somebody who reads, what do you
call somebody who listens?"
"Tell me something that doesn't live in the ocean."*

Elicit spontaneous speech

Ages 10 and up

Syntax
minimal errors in word order; adult sentence length;
includes variety of tense and clauses, including
_____ progressives

Semantics
_____ knows similarities and differences of curriculum objects

can define multiple curriculum words using at least 2 of
_____ the following: categories, examples, attributes, functions
_____ differentiates similar words

_____ consistently uses precise terms

_____ consistently answers mixed "wh" questions

_____ understands and explains idioms

Morphology
_____ any morphologic error
Pragmatics
_____ can distinguish facts and opinions
_____ requests clarifications

*Use phrases in sentences, such as "may be
able to, would have, will be, could have," etc.*

*"How are a microscope and a telescope alike,
and how are they different?"
"What is punctuation? What is an
ocean? What is a government?", etc.
"Is it worse to be furious or upset?" "Is it better
to be happy or ecstatic?
monitor conversation sample for excessive
use of demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these and
those) and words like "thing" and "stuff"
"Where/When/Why do you eat lunch? Who/What
is the President?"
"What really happens when a person turns the clock
back?... if something appears out of thin air?", etc.*

refer to suggestions for ages 7,8, and 9

*"I like pizza. Is that a fact or an opinion?
Say something very quietly.*