Semantics is the understanding of word meanings and the relationships between words. Children's semantic development is a gradual process beginning just before the child says their first word and inculces a wide range of word types.

A 1 year old can:
- Name some common objects
- Follow simple one-step directions
- Identify some body parts
- Answer basic yes/no questions
- Understand some locations words (e.g., in, on)
- Understand simple what, where and who questions

A 2 year old can now also:
- Understand a variety of word types (e.g., nouns, verbs, pronouns, prepositions, etc.)
- Understand some simple concept terms (e.g., big/little)
- Begin to follow simple two-step directions
- Include basic emotions words in vocabulary (e.g., sad, happy, mad)
- Understand some basic grammatical markers (e.g., -ing, plural s)

A 3 year old can now also:
- Name parts of objects (e.g., wheels, door handle, etc.)
- Sort objects into categories (e.g., foods, animals, clothing, etc.)
- Identify items that are the same or different
- Understand exclusionary term ‘not’ (e.g., find the hat that is not blue)
- Use some shape, colour, letter and number words

A 4 year old can now also:
- Describe the function of common objects (e.g., chair is for sitting, car is for driving)
- Describe differences and similarities between objects
- Provide common antonyms (e.g., wet vs dry) and synonyms (e.g., fast and quick)
- Identify things that go together (e.g., ball and bat, fork and spoon) from a small group of items
- Describe an object using 3 or more adjectives (e.g., size, shape, texture, appearance, etc.)

A 5 year old can now also:
- Sort items based on different categorization qualities (e.g., items that move, come from a farm, living vs non-living, etc.)
- Use a growing variety of words based on personal interests and experiences (e.g., musical terms, sporting words, cultural customs, etc.)
- Understand temporal concepts (e.g., before, after, yesterday, today, tomorrow)
- Provide simple definitions for some known words (e.g., genius means someone who is really smart)
- Use past knowledge to help them understand new word meanings

A 6 year old can now also:
- Name categories and subcategories (e.g., Clothing – winter items)
- Describe an item with four or more terms (e.g., category, parts, description, place of origin, etc.)
- Identify less obvious differences and similarities between objects (e.g. a bike is different from a motorcycle because one has an engine and the other you pedal)
- Understand superlatives (e.g., big, bigger, biggest)
- Understand more conjunction words (e.g. unless, so, while, since, etc.)
- Understand ordinal position (e.g., first, second, third, fourth, etc.)

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