SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT MILESTONES

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 incudes a wide range of word types.

A 1 year old can:	A 2 year old can now also:
✓ 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	✓ 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:	**A 4 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	✓ 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:	**A 6 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	✓ 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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