



## Thirty Million Words<sup>®</sup> SPEAK Questionnaire

### About the SPEAK:

The Survey of Parents'/Providers' Expectations And Knowledge (SPEAK) is online, self-administered clinical and research tools for assessing parents'/providers' expectations and knowledge of early childhood cognitive and language development.

The 10-item SPEAK-Clinical tool (SPEAK-C) is designed for providers/practitioners to assess baseline understanding and address common misconceptions regarding young children's cognitive and language development. There are two versions of the SPEAK-C specific to different age ranges:

- 1) Baby SPEAK-C covers infant cognitive and language development from birth to 12 months old
- 2) 0-5 SPEAK-C covers child cognitive and language development from birth to 5 years old

The 22-item SPEAK-Research tool (SPEAK-R) is designed for researchers to use in research studies where participant's expectations and knowledge about child language development needs to be assessed. It assess knowledge and beliefs regarding child cognitive and language development from birth to 5 years old in six subdomains:

- 1) Bilingualism
- 2) Early Exposure
- 3) Media Use for Child Learning
- 4) Nature versus Nurture
- 5) Sensitivity and Responsiveness
- 6) Talking and Reading

All three versions of the SPEAK have been translated into Spanish and thoroughly tested through cognitive interviewing and formative testing, and can be used to assess parents'/providers' expectations and knowledge about language development in Spanish-speaking individuals.

### What It Looks Like:

The SPEAK contains multiple choice questions that assess when individuals believe children are ready to be exposed to certain things and their knowledge and beliefs about child cognitive and language development in certain age ranges. At the end of the survey, standard demographics data are collected.

Sample questions include:

**When do you think a child is ready to be exposed to words?**

- As an infant (0 to 6 months)
- As a baby (6 to 12 months)
- As a toddler (1 to 3 years)
- In preschool (3 to 5 years)
- In Kindergarten (5 to 6 years)
- In elementary school (6 years and up)



Sample questions (continued):

	Definitely True	Probably True	Probably Not True	Definitely Not True
<b>Learning multiple languages creates more drawbacks than benefits for toddlers.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Children 0 to 2 years old can learn just as many words from educational TV as they can from their parents.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Testing reliability and validity:

Development of the SPEAK was guided by the theory emphasizing the pivotal role of caregiver-child interactions and language input quality in young children’s cognitive and language development. An initial item bank was developed based on extensive literature review; it was then refined through an iterative process involving consultations with leading language development experts, feedback from a series of cognitive interviews, and responses from multiple field tests. To capture the broad range of knowledge likely found among parents and caregivers, the item bank was administered on diverse samples of adults, including mixed-SES parents, primary caregivers, educators, early education administrators, pediatric providers, and early childhood research professionals. Classical test theory and item response theory methods for polytomous items were applied to the responses to inform selection of items for the SPEAK-C and the SPEAK-R. Cronbach’s alpha estimates for the 10- and 22-item versions were 0.86 and 0.92, respectively. Scores on the SPEAK-C or the SPEAK-R increased with educational levels, as expected. External validity of the SPEAK-C and the SPEAK-R will be tested through examining its associations with behaviors measured by the NCAST (Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training).

### What We’re Doing Now:

In order to further validation efforts, Thirty Million Words® is opening up the SPEAK for wider use, both in Spanish and in English. Organizations and other institutions are now able to implement the SPEAK in their own studies to assess parents’/providers’ expectations and knowledge about language development. In order to use the instrument, an inter-institutional data sharing agreement is required. This will give partnering institutions access to the SPEAK survey via the secure REDCap web application and simultaneously give Thirty Million Words access to de-identified survey and demographics data collected, furthering validation of the questionnaire.

### Organized Data Management Through REDCap:

Partnering institutions gain access to the SPEAK survey through REDCap, a web application for building and managing online surveys and databases. Through REDCap, partnering institutions can easily implement the survey, manage their participants’ data, and export data for analysis through the secure and easy to use platform. Researchers can implement surveys directly with participants with the online platform or email participants a secure link that is connected directly to their unique study identification number. The online management system is set up to auto-score the SPEAK survey for easy analysis. REDCap allows Thirty Million Words and the partnering institution immediate access to de-identified survey responses and demographics information for analysis.

#### For more information, please contact us:

Dana L. Suskind, M.D.  
TMW Founder and Director  
dsuskind@surgery.bsd.uchicago.edu

Christy Y. Y. Leung, Ph.D.  
Research Director  
cleung@surgery.bsd.uchicago.edu

