

Children born more than 3 weeks premature may develop language problems

[R]esearchers have looked at the language development of preterm children – both those born three weeks early and those born a full three months early.

It turns out that most children [born preterm](#) lag behind in language development to begin with. But many of them manage to catch up by the time they are three to five years old.

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The researchers examined children who were born more than three weeks early, at week 37 or earlier.

They divided the children into three groups:

1. Children born three to six weeks preterm (between weeks 35 and 37)
2. Children born six to twelve weeks preterm (between weeks 29 and 34)
3. Children born more than 12 weeks preterm (before week 28)

The results show that children in the first group lag behind in language development when they are one and a half years old, but not when they are three and five years old.

The children in the second group have language delays at both three and five years of age. But here too the differences gradually diminish, with most youngsters catching up before they turn three years old.

Kids in the third group had the hardest time. They experienced the most language delays – and still did at age five.

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