

Speech Sound Development

Not all speech sounds develop at the same time. As your child grows, his / her ability to make more difficult sounds improves. A baby makes early vocal noises around two to three months, babbles around six months, and uses jargon (sequences of sounds that sound like sentences without any recognizable meaning) from 18 to 30 months. By three years of age, your child should have many recognizable speech sounds, but will probably not be using all speech sounds correctly.

Please see reverse for a summary of speech sound development.

You can help your child talk more clearly by...

- Being a good speech model for your child by speaking clearly.
- Not correcting the way your child says a word. Instead, say the correct pronunciation back to your child in your response without expecting him / her to repeat the correct version back to you. This increases your child's awareness of the sound without leading to frustration at being corrected.
- Trying to be at face level and looking at your child while talking with him / her. This lets your child see how your face, lips, and tongue move to form different sounds.
- Putting extra emphasis on sounds that are hard for your child to say, so that these sounds are highlighted for your child.
- Repeating new words and sounds over and over; use them often during conversations with your child.
- Making a scrapbook with your child. Cut out and paste pictures of objects your child learns to say or recognize.
- Praising your child when sounds are said correctly, especially if the sounds were previously hard for your child.
- Not trying to rush speech development; it will take time. Avoid pressuring your child to perform beyond his / her ability. If your child's not ready to say a sound yet, wait a while. Every child develops speech sounds at a different pace.
- Making sure that learning to use new sounds is a fun, positive experience for your child.

Summary of Speech Sound Development:

AGE

CONSONANT SOUNDS

3 years

- p, b, m, n, h, w, d
- 65% understandable to strangers
- Replaces harder sounds with easier sounds
- Omits some final consonant sounds

4 years

- f, y, k, g, t, ng are added
- s-blends are added (for example, 'snake')
- 75% to 90% understandable to strangers
- May have difficulty saying words with more than two syllables (for example, may say "ambee-ence" for "ambulance")

5+ years

- sh, ch, r, s, l, v, z, th, j are added
- Over 90% understandable to strangers
- Over 5 years, likely to have ongoing difficulties with:
 - s & z (replaces with th)
 - r (replaces with w)
 - l (replaces with w or y)
 - th (replaces with d or f)
 - Consonant blends (such as tr, bl, or sn)

3 years		4 years		5+ years	
p					
b					
m					
n					
h					
w					
d					
t					
		f			
		y			
		k			
		g			
		ng			
				sh	
				ch	
				r	
				s	
				l	
				v	
				z	
				th	
				j	

