

# Speech sound development

Information for parents and carers



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Appropriate ages at which children can normally produce speech sounds	90 per cent of children
All common vowels (a e i o u ee oh oo)	3 years
p b t d m n w	3 years
k g f h y (as in “yet”) ng (as in “sing”)	4 years
s z v l	5 years
sh ch j Blends with “s” (as in stairs, sweetie)	6 years
r th as in “thin” and “then”  Blends with “r” and “l” (as in black, pram, flower)	7 years

## Ways to help your child

- Always make sure you have your child’s attention before you speak to them.
- Don’t make them say the word again- just repeat individual words they are having difficulty with, letting them hear the correct model. Don’t emphasise or repeat the particular sound they are having difficulty with – for example, it’s a “cup” rather than it’s a “c c cup”.
- Slow down what you say to your child.

- Avoid putting pressure on your child, or blaming them. Don't tell them they've got it wrong. Tell your child "oh dear, my ears aren't working today, can you say that again".
- Help them recognise their mistakes by saying things like, "Are you sure you need a tap....did you mean your cap?"
- Repeat the words they have difficulty with often so they can hear exactly how it should sound. For example, "Let's go to the car. Mummy's opening the car."

### Ways to help your child

- Tell them when you don't understand. "A hoo? Do you mean a shoe?"
- Give them lots of praise if they correct the mistake themselves.
- Speech sounds develop normally at the end of words first, then in the middle and then at the beginning. Combinations of consonants develop last. So if your child can say "s" in "dress", and "castle" but not in sun or spider don't worry about this.
- Remember your child doesn't know their speech is unclear. Sometimes they need to get frustrated to help them realise they need to change their speech pattern. This is a very common problem and the majority of children will learn to say all their sounds without the need for any specific help.

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