

Speech Sound Development

What is “Speech”?

Speech is the process of producing or articulating individual sounds.

There is some room for variation within what is considered to be ‘typical’ speech sound development. Although each child develops somewhat differently, the following are some general guidelines outlining the order in which speech sounds usually emerge.

Some sounds come earlier than others because they are easier to make. This may be because of:

- where the sound is produced in the mouth (i.e., lip sounds /b, p, m, w/ are usually the first to emerge)
- how the sound is made in the mouth (e.g., a short sound like /t/ as in ‘**t**oe’ is easier than a long sound like /s/ as in ‘**s**ee’)

Sound Mastery	Sounds
1 st	p, b, m, w, h
Next	t, d, n, k, g, y, f, ng, s
Later	v, ch, j, sh, zh, z, l, r

Age	Percentage of Speech Understood by Others
2 years	50%
3 years	75%
4 years	100% (although some errors may still be present)
6 years	Adult – like speech

Here’s how you can help promote your child’s speech sound development:

- **Be A Good Speech Model**
 - Speak slowly, clearly and accurately
 - Avoid using baby talk
 - Speak face to face with your child
- **Reflect** - “reflect” what your child is trying to say, emphasizing the sound(s) they missed by saying them *louder* and *longer* than the rest of the sounds in the word. For example:
 - Child says “**th**oup”; Adult responds, “**sss**oup”
 - Child says “my **w**ittle **t**ar”; Adult responds, “yes, **llll**ittle **c**ar.”
- **Play with Sounds**
 - Make sounds for actions and objects (e.g. vvvvmm for a car, “sss” for a snake, “glug, glug” for teddy drinking, etc). Playing with sounds provides fun opportunities for children to try new sounds and practice familiar sounds as well.