

Talking Matters

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Helping your child to reach their potential



Speech Development

Children develop speech sounds over time and children reach an adult level of speech at around 7 to 8 years. Sound development follows a consistent pattern for most children and most can be understood by strangers by three years of age. If you are concerned about your child's speech development an assessment by a speech pathologist can tell you if your child needs extra help and what you can do.

Typical ages for sounds to develop are

- 3 years – m, n, h, p, w, d, g, y, k, f, b, t
- 4 years – sh, ch, j, l, s
- 5 years – r, v
- 6 years – z
- 8 years – th



An assessment is recommended if your child:



- Is not using the sounds listed above by the expected age
- Is hard for parents to understand at age 2 years
- Is hard for strangers to understand at age 3 years
- Leaves many sounds off the beginning of words from age 2 years
- Leaves sounds off the ends of words from 2 ½ years
- Uses only a few sounds e.g. many sounds replaced with “d” after 2 1/2 years
- Speech sounds unusual e.g. nasally or slushy

Speech therapy is effective in developing correct speech patterns and early intervention usually means quicker progress. Children with long term speech difficulties may develop difficulties with learning to read and write at school. Therapy which begins in the toddler or preschool years is recommended.

To help your child to learn new sounds you can repeat back what they say clearly and emphasise the difficult sound e.g. Child “where’s my soo”. Adult “**Sh**oe, here’s your **sh**oe”. Use a positive, encouraging tone of voice to help your child feel good about communicating.

