

Speech Sounds

Typical Development of Speech

Young children take several years to develop all the correct speech sounds in words. It is a gradual process from babbling, to putting sounds together to form words and sentences. Some children will progress more quickly than others.

Some children have quite clear speech from early on, and others need more time to learn. Early sounds used by children include: p, b, m, d, n, h, t; later sounds include: r, th, ch. Nursery children would not be expected to use these later sounds.

Even adults in a family can find it difficult to understand the speech of children, under the age of 3 years. By the time children are 5 years old, most adults should always understand what they have said, even if all the right speech sounds have not been used.

How to help

Here are some ways to help your child develop their speech sounds:

- ✓ Be face-to-face when talking to your child, so that they can see and hear your speech sounds
- ✓ Encourage your child to feel relaxed and confident; praise them for what has been said, not how it has been said
- ✓ Repeat what your child says, using the right speech sounds, e.g. if your child says: 'Look, a tat!' you say: 'Yes, you're right it's a cat' or your child says: "*I like tories at cool*", you say: "*Yes, stories at school are fun*"

If you are worried about your child's speech, think...

- Can close family adults understand my 3 year old?
- Can adults in the family and at nursery / school understand my 4 year old?
- Is my child happy and confident to talk?
- Can my child use lots of different sounds when talking?

If the answer to the above questions is 'no' you may wish to contact a Speech and Language Therapist. Contact and Helpline details are [here](#).

[Let's Talk Bitesize... Tips for Developing Speech Sounds.mp4 on Vimeo](#)



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