

Learning to communicate is a step by step process for all children.

A new born communicates by crying, a six month old experiments with sounds, a three year can string a four word sentence together, and by age five, Most children can be understood by anyone.

Many parents wonder if their children's speech and language is developing normally. Most children's speech becomes clearer gradually.

As they hear and use sounds, words, and sentences. Be aware, too, that ear infections are common in children and they can interfere with sound development.

Translated from Fact sheet 2.3 produced by
Speech Pathology Australia



Trading times

Weekdays	9am - 6pm
Saturday	9am - 3pm

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SPEECH PATHOLOGY

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The ages
and stages
of
children's
speech



Between birth and three years children should be able to say

- Lip sounds p b m w
- Tongue tip sounds t d n
- Back of the mouth sounds kg
- Other sounds h y

Sucking and learning to bite and chew as well as putting objects in their mouths are all important. These behaviours help children become aware of their mouth parts and to control their movement and positions.

By four and four and a half years children should be able to say

- Tongue tip sounds – s z
- Middle of the mouth sounds sh ch
- Other sounds l j f

Most children can be understood most of the time by this age. Their speech may become less clear if they are tired, unwell or excited.

Songs rhymes, play, books, talking and listening to children all help them to learn correct sounds and word patterns.



When To Seek Help?

Contact a Speech Pathologist if you are worried about you child's speech and language if your child sounds quite different from the ages and stages outlined above, or if your three year old cannot be understood by adults.

By seven and a half years children should be able to say

- All sounds clearly
- The last sounds to develop are – v th r

Some children take extra time to blend sounds together for example, tree, plane and desk

Children learning more than one language

Children in bilingual families, or who are learning more than one language, may need more time to learn sounds. This is because each language has it own unique sounds. Reading, writing and spelling can help children to learn the difference between sounds.

Learning to use sounds

Children make errors when they begin to talk. They may

- Say an easier sound for a more difficult one such as tar for car
- Leave out sounds like boa for boat
- Leave out parts of words such as "puter" for computer
- Mix up the order of sounds such as psghetti for spaghetti
- Say one sound instead of two such as pane for plane

Sometimes children make several mistakes in one sentence. For example, "let's go to the park" may sound like "we do t u part"

Helping children to learn sounds

- Enjoy learning sounds as new sounds emerge praise and imitate them
- When you don't understand a word or sentence gently say so...and then try to work it out together
- When necessary ask the child to show you what they are talking about
- Check you have the message correct
- Expect mistakes as learning to talk takes years
- Listen to what the overall message is rather than every sound
- Speak clearly and simply and talk together often

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