



LET'S TALK

... FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Learning Speech Sounds— It Takes Time

Talking doesn't just happen. Children learn to speak gradually.

Some sounds like *p, b, m, t, d,* and *n* are usually mastered by age three years while others like *r, l, th,* and *s* may not be correct until the early school-age years. While learning to speak, all children pronounce some words incorrectly. You may hear a child substitute one sound for another (*wabbit* for *rabbit*), or omit a sound (*han* for *hand*) or distort a sound (*shlip* for *ship*).

Although these are common speech errors and will probably disappear as a child gets older, they might also be signs of an articulation disorder. Simply stated, an articulation disorder exists when a child consistently makes speech sound errors that are not usually made by children of the same age.

Sometimes articulation disorders are caused by physical problems like a cleft palate or cerebral palsy. However, for many articulation problems, there is no known cause.

Distinguishing between simple mispronunciations and articulation disorders can be difficult. If you are concerned about your child's speech, refer to the developmental chart shown. It will help you understand what to expect from children at specific ages.

If you think your child might have an articulation problem, you should make an appointment for an evaluation by a speech-language pathologist who is certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

During the evaluation, your child's speech will be examined in many different situations: naming pictures, counting, reading (if appropriate). The speech-language pathologist will listen carefully to your child's production of sounds; determine the kind of errors and their consistency; and recommend a treatment program if necessary.



If you think your child might have an articulation problem, you should make an appointment for an evaluation by a speech-language pathologist who is certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

If you need to find an ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist near you, contact your local school system or call ASHA at 800-638-8255. To use ASHA's free referral service to locate an ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist in your area, go to www.asha.org, and click on the ProSearch icon.

Preschool and school-age children who have communication disorders that adversely affect their

education are eligible for services under federal law—the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA)—and under additional state laws and local requirements. For information about IDEA, log onto the IDEA Partnerships Web site at www.ideapractices.org or the U.S. Department of Education at www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA.

Your child may have an articulation disorder if sounds are not progressing according to the following developmental sequence.

Birth-3 Months

- makes pleasure sounds (cooing)
- cries differently for different needs
- smiles when seeing you

4-6 Months

- babbling sounds more speech-like with many different sounds, including *p, b, m*
- vocalizes excitement and displeasure
- makes gurgling sounds when left alone and when playing with you

7 Months–1 Year

- babbling has both long and short groups of sounds (*tata, upup, bibibibi*)
- uses speech or non-crying sounds to get and keep attention
- imitates different speech sounds
- has 1 or 2 words (*bye-bye, dada, mama*) although they may not be clear

LET'S TALK)))

1–2 Years

- about 50% of speech can be understood by a stranger by age 2
- about 12 consonants account for 95% of the child's utterances (*p, t, k, b, d, g, m, n, w, j, h*).
- uses consonant sounds mostly at the beginning of words

2–3 Years

- about 75% of speech can be understood by a stranger by age 3
- by 3 years of age most children can say most sounds at the beginning, middle, and ends of words about 50% of the time

- the average 3 year old can pronounce consonant blends (*st, pr*) at the beginnings and ends of words

3–4 Years

- about 90% of speech can be understood by a stranger by age 4
- may still have trouble with longer words (*spaghetti, aluminum*)

4–5 Years

- sounds are clear like other children's
- says most sounds correctly except a few like *l* and *r*)))

.....
If you have concerns about your child's speech or language development, please contact an ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist. Go to ASHA's website at www.asha.org for information and referrals or call 800-638-8255.



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
1-800-638-8255 (Voice or TTY)
Email: actioncenter@asha.org
Website: www.asha.org

.....
Compliments of

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike • Rockville MD • 20852 • 800-638-8255
and