

Speech Sounds

Children's Speech and Language Therapy
Acute and Community AHPs

Introduction

This leaflet is produced for parents who may have concerns about their child's speech sound development. We hope you find this information useful if you require further information, please telephone us on 01902 444363.

What are Speech sounds?

Speech sounds are the production of sequences of sounds that make up words. Children learn how to use speech sounds by listening to the sounds they hear in the words and sentences around them. Children start by practicing sounds without any meaning (babbling) and then progress to using sounds in words, sentences and conversations.

From birth until the age of 7 or 8 years old, children are developing muscle memory, strength, and coordination for speech sounds. As children are learning to talk, their sound system develops gradually. This means that they cannot say all their sounds straight away as some are later to develop than others.

To make it easier for them to say words young children may substitute some sounds for others. This is because these sounds are easier to say but it can mean that it can be difficult to understand everything the child says.

How do speech sounds develop?

This is how speech sounds develop typically:

18-24 months	Children use a limited number of sounds in their words, generally p, b, t, d, m and w. Children will also often miss the ends off words at this stage. They can be understood about half of the time.
2-3 years	Children use a wider range of speech sounds. However, many children will shorten longer words, such as saying 'nana' instead of 'banana'. They may also have difficulty where lots of sounds happen together in a word, e.g. they may say 'pider' instead of 'spider.' They often have problems saying more difficult sounds like 'sh', 'ch', 'th' and 'r.' However, people that know them can mostly understand them.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

3-4 years	Children still have difficulties with a small number of sounds – for example 'r', 'w', 'l', 'f', 'th', 'sh', 'ch' and 'z'.
4-5 years	Children can use most sounds effectively. However, they may have some difficulties with longer or more difficult words such as 'scribble' or 'elephant'.

Strategies to help develop speech sound skills

Try not to distort sounds or words by over emphasising. Draw the word to the child's attention by saying it repeatedly e.g. 'that was a good kick, a really good kick'.

Model the correct sounds back to them in words without correcting. For example, if they substitute 'k' for 't' and they say 'tat' you model back 'yes, it's a cat' without any pressure for them to repeat it back for you.

Further information to support your child can be found in these leaflets:

Attention and listening skills

Receptive Language

Expressive Language

Social Communication Skills

All are available from the website

How do I get in touch?

Speech and Language Therapy Service

The Gem Centre

Neachells Lane

Wednesfield

Wolverhampton

WV11 3PG

Telephone: 01902 444363

E-mail: rwh-tr.Speech-And-Language@nhs.net

Website: <https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/services/service-directory-a-z/speech-and-language-therapy/>

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。