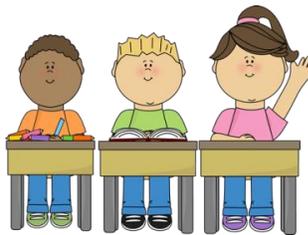


# How Children Develop Speech Sounds

## What age most children can say these sounds

<b>Toddler</b> (By 3 ½ Years)	<b>Early Preschool</b> (By 3 ½ - 4 Years)	<b>Late Preschool</b> (By 4 ½ - 5 ½ Years)	<b>School Age</b> (By 7 – 8 Years)
 <p>p m b h n w d</p>	 <p>g t k f</p>	 <p>s blends sh s y ('ya' sound as in yes)</p>	 <p>ng (ing) j (joy) th ch v z l r r blends (<i>green</i>) l blends (<i>clean</i>)</p>

'Blends' means when 2 consonants are together in the same word such as **stop**, **spider**, **snake**, **brook**, **please**.

## How children's speech develops

As children learn to talk, they all make similar speech errors as they create easy ways to say words. We call these patterns of speech. As children grow older, they stop using these patterns to simplify words. This is a normal process unless they continue to make these speech errors beyond the age of when most children have stopped.



Common Speech Errors	Example	Age when stops
When part of a word is repeated	"water" becomes "wawa"	3 years
The final sound in a word is left off	"pig" becomes "pi"	3 ½ years
A sound usually made in the back of the mouth is made in the front	"kiss" becomes "tiss" "go" becomes "do"	3 ½ years
When a sound starts to sound like another sound in the word	"dog" becomes "gog"	3 ½ years
When a cluster of sounds is produced as a single sound	"spider" becomes "pider"	4 years
Stopping 'f' and 's' - When these sounds are made as a 'p', 'b', 't' or 'd'	"funny" becomes "bunny" "sunny" becomes "tunny"	4 years
Stopping 'v', 'sh', 'j', 'ch', and 'th' - When these sounds are made as a 'p', 'b', 't', 'd', 'k' or 'g'	"jump" becomes "dump" "vacuum" becomes "bacuum"	5 years
Gliding of 'r' and 'l' - When these sounds are made as a 'w' or 'y'	"ring" becomes "wing" "love" becomes "wove"	5 ½ years

### Understanding your child's speech

We consider a child's speech easy to understand when both those who spend the most time with the child (parents, siblings) and those who spend less time with them (grandparents, teachers, babysitters) can easily understand them.

### Age speech should be clear

- At 2 years, you should understand half of what your child says.
- At 3 years, you should understand most of what your child says.
- At 4 years, you should understand almost all of what your child says.

### Times when it can be harder to understand your child

- If your child is speaking quickly
- If you do not know what your child is talking about
- If your child is speaking quietly or loudly
- If your child is tired, excited, or upset
- If you are distracted by other sounds and activities while you are listening to your child (for example, when the TV is on or when you are on your phone while your child is speaking to you).
- If the person does not spend a lot of time with your child (for example, you, as parents, might understand more but an aunt who visits once in a while might find it harder to understand your child).

### When you are having trouble understanding you child

- Make eye contact and try to be at your child's level. This might mean getting down on your knee so you can be face to face with your child.
- Repeat any parts that you did understand. For example, if your child says, "Uh gug sa daddy.", you can say, "Daddy? What about Daddy?"
- Ask your child to show you what they mean. For example, this could mean leading you by the hand, pointing, using gestures, or showing you in a book or a picture.
- If your child becomes frustrated, tell them you know they are frustrated. Plan to try again later.

Any time you are concerned or have questions about your child's speech, you can arrange to have a speech-language pathologist check your child's speech. Call your local Public Health Unit and ask to be referred to a speech-language pathologist.

#### For more information

Contact your Speech-Language Pathologist  
or  
Contact your local Public Health Unit