

Speech Sound Development Chart

Speech sound development occurs on a continuum; some children may acquire sounds earlier or later than indicated. This chart should be a guideline, not a diagnostic tool.

2-3 Years

/p/, /b/, /d/, /m/, n/, /h/, /w/

3-4 Years

/t/, /k/, /g/, /f/, 'y', -ng

4-5 Years

/v/, /s/, /z/, /l/, 'sh', 'ch', 'j'

5-6 Years

voiced "th", "r"

6-7 Years

voiceless "th"

Crowe, k & McLeod, S. (2020). Children's English Consonant acquisition in the United States: A Review. American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology.

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Phonological Processes

Predictable, rule-based patterns of sound errors used to simplify speech sounds.

Phonological Process	Description
Final Consonant Deletion	<p>The child omits the last consonant in a word.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: cat → "ca"• Eliminated around 3 years old
Fronting	<p>Sounds that are typically pronounced in the back of the mouth (like /k/ and /g/) are replaced with sounds produced further forward (like /t/ and /d/).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: goat → "doat"• Eliminated around 3-4 years old
Backing	<p>Sounds typically pronounced in the front of the mouth (like /t/ and /d/) are replaced with sounds produced further back (like /k/ and /g/). Opposite of fronting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: tea → "kea"• Eliminated around 3-4 years old
Cluster Reduction	<p>The child simplifies consonant clusters by omitting one or more consonants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: truck → "tuck"• Eliminated around 4-5 years old
Stopping	<p>The child replaces a fricative (like "s," "sh," or "f") or an affricate (like "ch" or "j") with a stop consonant (like "t," "d," "p," or "k").</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: sock → "tock"• Eliminated around 4-5 years old
Gliding	<p>When "r" and "l" sounds are replaced with "w" and "y."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: rabbit → "wabbit"• Eliminated around 4-5 years old

Bernthal, J. E., Bankson, N. W., & Flipsen, P. (2017).
Articulation and Phonological Disorders: Speech Sound Disorders in Children (8th Edition). Pearson.

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Strategies for Supporting Receptive Language Skills

- **Simplify Instructions-** Break directions into shorter, more manageable steps (e.g., “First, clean up your area. [Pause.] Now, grab your lunchbox.”). Give one direction at a time.
- **Use Visual Aids-** Pair spoken instructions with visual supports (e.g., schedule charts, picture cues, first/then boards). Use gestures or physical modeling (e.g., pointing).
- **Check for Understanding-** Instead of asking if they understand, tell them to “show me what to do”.
- **Rephrase and Repeat Key Information-** Try rewording instead of repeating it the same way.
- **Offer choices-** “Do we wash our hands or put our shoes on first?”.
- **Provide Extra Time for Processing-** Some children need more time, silently count to 10 in your head before repeating the question.
- **Create Predictable Routines-** Establish consistent daily routines to help children anticipate what’s coming next.
- **Use Transition Warnings-** Use timers or phrases, e.g., “in two minutes, we’ll clean up”.
- **Encourage Peer Support-** Pair students with stronger language skills with those needing extra support for structured activities.



Strategies for Supporting Expressive Language Skills

- **Narrate:** Talk about what you and the child are doing to connect words with actions. For example: “We are stacking blocks—up, up, up... crash! Boom!”
- **Expansion Technique:** When a child says a word or short phrase, add more detail to build their language skills. For example, if they say “truck,” you might respond with: “big red truck!” or “fast truck, zoom!”
- **Repetition Strategy:** Repeat words during play to help children learn and remember new vocabulary. For example, while playing with a ball, say: “Roll the ball. Catch the ball. Throw the ball!”
- **Avoid Direct Prompts:** Instead of instructing the child with phrases like “Say help” or “Say open,” which can create pressure, model the word naturally. Use fill-in-the-blank sentences such as “I need help” or “Open my milk.”
- **Play with Sounds:** Incorporate fun animal and exclamatory sounds like “Uh-oh!”, “Zzz” (zip) or “Whee!” to engage your child and encourage imitation.
- **Incorporate Pretend Play and Routines:** Use pretend play and daily activities to teach action words, sequencing, and social routines. For example: “The doll is hungry. She wants to eat. Oh, she’s sleepy! Let’s brush her teeth and put her to bed.”
- **Reading and Describing Pictures:** If your child isn’t focusing on the whole book, talk about the pictures instead. For example: “I see a cat hiding under the bed,” or “The girl is running fast.” Sit across from the child to encourage engagement and connection.
- **Add Gestures to Words:** Use gestures in the classroom to reinforce language and meaning. For example, wave and say “bye-bye” during transitions, use the sign for “more” during snack time, or clap your hands while saying “Good job!” Gestures give visual support to help children understand and imitate language.
- **Offer Choices:** Provide two options (e.g., “Do you want an apple or a banana?”) to encourage decision-making and build language skills.
- **Praise all communication attempts** to use words or sounds to boost confidence!



Stuttering Strategies



BELLY BREATH



BELLY BREATH: *diaphragmatic breathing*

- 1) Put your hands on your belly
- 2) Take a deep breath in
- 3) Feel your belly fill up with air (like a balloon)
- 4) Keep your shoulders down
- 5) Use all of the air in your belly to turn on your voice box and speak smoothly!



SLOW SPEECH



SLOW SPEECH: *reduced rate of speech*

- 1) Speak slowly
- 2) Pause between words
- 3) Remember to use good breath phrasing
- 4) Sing songs or read poems to practice
- 5) Try using a metronome or delayed auditory feedback (DAF) to facilitate



STRETCHY SPEECH



STRETCHY SPEECH: *slow stretched speech*

- 1) Stretch out first sound in a word (i.e., lllllland)
- 2) If the 1st sound is NOT m, n, l, r, w, y, v, voiced th, z and j or a vowel, stretch 2nd sound
- 3) Use rubber band or putty to model
- 4) This slows speech down & helps client feel how the mouth is making sounds
- 5) Just for practice, won't speak this way forever

Visuals from @ stutteringtherapy_nj.

