



Supporting Speech Development

Speech development

Speech sounds develop from the time a child starts using words until the early years at school. Children's speech generally gets clearer and easier to understand as they get older.

Not all speech sounds develop at the same rate. Generally, by 7 years of age all speech sounds should be clear.

Please see Normal Speech Development Advice sheet for more information.

Speech difficulties

Some children can have difficulties with their speech that range from certain words sounding immature right through to all speech sounds being difficult to understand.

Your child may:

- Mix up sounds in words
- Use incorrect sounds or not say sounds clearly
- Struggle to imitate certain sounds
- Think they are saying the same sound as you when they are not
- Leave sounds out of words





What can I do to help my child talk more clearly?

Speak clearly and encourage your child to **watch your face when you are speaking**. This will help your child to hear and see how you are making the sounds.

Encourage your child to **speak freely in the way that is easiest for them**. The more they practise the better their speech will be.

Accept any attempt at a word as a good try. Then try and use the word yourself e.g. if your child says 'tat' for 'cat' you could say 'Yes, a cat'

If you can't understand, **encourage your child to show you what they mean or to use gesture**.

Make a scrapbook of pictures containing words with the sound that your child has difficulty with.

Be aware that single consonants (e.g. "s") will develop before consonant blends (e.g. "sp" and "st")



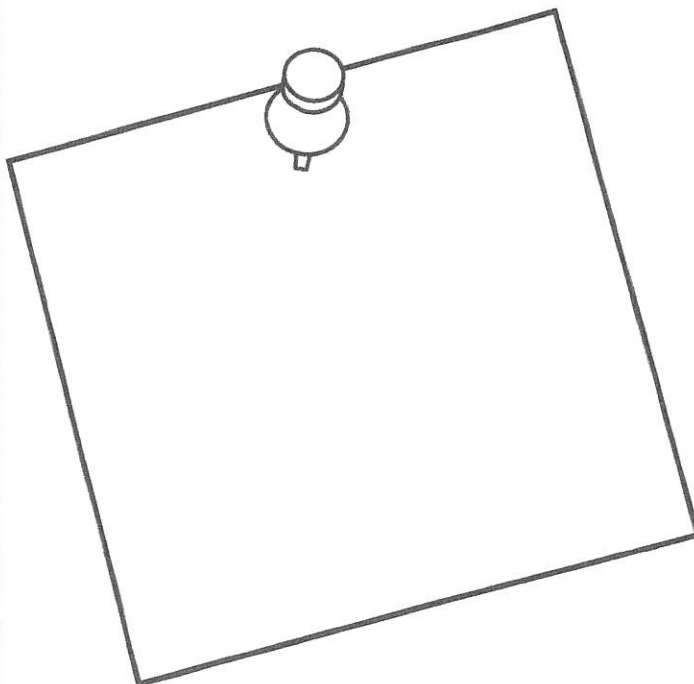
Don't make your child repeat a word until they get it right.

Don't let the family copy or use your child's incorrect words –it may sound cute but won't when they are older.

Don't let other members of the family make fun of attempts at words.

Don't think your child is just lazy when they do not speak clearly.

Don't expect your child to be able to say all sounds correctly as soon as they begin to talk. Remember sounds develop slowly with age.



Apps to try:

Speech Stickers

Phonics Studio

**Articulation Station Pro (Little
Bee Speech)**

**Articulation Scenes (Smarty
Ears)**