

Speech Sound Development

0 to 3 years

3 to 5 years

5 years +

b, m, n,
h, w, p

d, t, g,
k, ng

y, zh

f, l, s,
sh, ch,
z

j, r

v

th

Babies

- Babies are learning the complex skills of controlling their lips, tongue, cheeks, jaw, palate, diaphragm and lungs to make sounds.
- Your baby will make lots of vowel sounds ("oooo", "ah", "eye eye").
- Many of their words will be simple sounds ("dar" for star, "mah" for mummy). This is completely normal for their age.

Toddlers

- Your toddler will still make mistakes when saying words.
- Simplifying words - "bisketi" for spaghetti
- Reducing clusters of sounds - "tee" for tree
- Making sounds at the 'front of their mouth (for example "tar" for car)
- By 3 years, your toddler should be understood by most adults.

Preschoolers

- By four years, your child will be able to say most sounds.
- Some sounds may still be difficult including 'r', 'v' and 'th'.
- Some sound combinations and long words will still be tricky for your preschooler. For example they may say "stawberry" for strawberry and "amblance" for ambulance.
- When children start school their speech should be easily understood by unfamiliar listeners.

When to get help

Baby

- If your baby is not making sounds when they play

Toddler

- If you cannot understand what your toddler is trying to tell you at 2 years
- If other people find your 3 year old difficult to understand

Preschooler

- If your child is starting school and their speech is still unclear