Manchester Local Care Organisation | Trafford Local Care Organisation

Helping Young Children with Early Speech Sounds

Speech sound development is a complicated process and can take time to develop. It can be frustrating for you and your child when you don't understand what they are saying, but don't worry; here are some helpful strategies you can try at home.

Sounds develop in a particular order and some harder than others, for example "ch" is harder than "b" and develops later. Generally children can say these sounds by the following ages…

Sound	50% of children can say this sound by		90% of children can say this sound by
p,b,m,n,t,d,w	1 ½ - 2 years	**Don't worry if your child is not able to say these sounds yet!**	3 years
k,g,f,h,y	1 ½ - 3 years		4 years
ng,s	1 ½ - 3 years		5 years
L	3 - 4 years		6 years
sh,ch,j,z,v	3 ½ - 4 ½ years		6 years
r	4 ½ - 5 years		7 years
Cluster sounds - cl, fl, br, tr, sm, sk, st	5 years plus		7 years plus

THINGS THAT HELP:

- ☺ Have fun playing with interesting sounds together, like animal and transport noises.
- ☺ Encourage your child to talk and play with others. This will help their communication skills and confidence to develop.
- ☺ Turn off the TV, radio, and DVD whilst you practise so your child can hear you and other people speaking.
- ☺ Repeat words clearly back to your child without asking them to copy (this is called modelling).
  - Child: "look, a **t**at"
  - You: "Yes it's a **c**at"
- ☺ Listen to what your child says and not how they say it.
- ☺ Songs and rhymes can be really helpful.

THINGS TO AVOID:

- ☹ Don't tell your child that they have made a mistake … try to accept their attempt at a word, however unclear it may seem.
- ☹ Use modelling instead.
- ☹ Don't try to make your child say a sound or word correctly. This may lead to frustration or a negative attitude towards speaking.
- ☹ Talking around a dummy can cause speech problems. It is better to reduce the use of dummies altogether, but if not, it should always come out for talking.

If you are having trouble understanding your child you could:
Go back and repeat the part of the message you understood e.g. "Going where?" or "Mum said what?"
Ask them to tell you some more about it or offer a choice.
Can they show you or take you there?
Once you think you have grasped what the child has said, **model** it back to them.

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