

## Typical speech sound development

### 2–3 years

- Children are using the following sounds in their speech: p, b, m, n, w, t, d, h
- Other sounds may not be used at this point, and longer or more complicated words will often not yet be clear, even with the early sounds above.
- In general, speech is often difficult for unfamiliar listeners to understand.

### 3–4 years

- Children will have clearer speech, although they will still have some immaturities. They may not yet be saying more difficult sounds like 'sh', 'ch', 'l' & 'r', and clusters of 2 consonants e.g. st.
- Some children at this age will not yet be using sounds such as 'k', 'g', 's', 'z', 'f' and 'v', though they should develop during the year they are 3.
- People who know the child can mostly understand them.

### 4–5 years

- Children will have mostly clear speech, though will continue to have difficulties with a small number of sounds – for example 'sh' as in 'show', 'j' as in 'jam', 'l' – as in 'letter', 'r' – as in 'rabbit' and 'th' as in 'thumb'.
- Words with clusters of sounds such as 'st', 'sl', 'sp', 'cr', 'fl' will often be unclear at this point.
- If sounds such as 'k', 'g', 's', 'z', 'f' and 'v' are not in place, this is delayed for their age.

### 5–6 years

- Children use most speech sounds. However, they may not yet be able to say longer and more complex words clearly, such as 'scribble' or 'elephant'.
- Some speech sounds such as 'r', 'th', and clusters of sounds such as 'sl', 'pr', 'tw', 'sk', may not yet be developed.

### 6–7 years

Children produce speech that is clear and easy to understand, though may still have some immaturities:

- 'th' sounds – typically produced as 'f' and 'v', and 'r' sound – typically produced as 'w'
- Combinations of consonant sounds e.g. 'pider' (spider), 'fower' (flower), 'bikkit' (biscuit)
- Words with 3 or more syllables may be mixed up e.g. 'pasketti' for spaghetti, 'efalent' for elephant.

### By age 7

- Use speech that is consistently clear and easy to understand.
- There may still be occasional errors with longer words, with words with 2-3 consonants together at the start (e.g. **scramble**, **stranger**), and with the 'r' and 'th' sounds.