

Articulation: When Should I Worry If My Child is Behind?

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Developing speech and language skills is a difficult task. It is natural for young children to make mistakes in the process of learning to speak. Most children eventually drop errors in their speech and develop normal speech patterns. Some children continue to make errors beyond the age when other children have mastered those sounds.



It may be time to show concern if you observe one or more of the following:

1. Family members or friends have a hard time understanding your child.
2. A child demonstrates frustration because you don't understand his/her speech.
3. Your child shows no signs of frustration when trying to communicate, but you do not understand his/her speech.

This is the time to seek a professional's opinion. Direct questions about your child's speech development to a local speech-language pathologist (SLP). To find an SLP in your area, visit <http://www.asha.org/findpro/>. A certified SLP administers a standardized test comparing your child's skills to other children his/her age. These test results, in addition to other information, determine whether your child requires speech therapy.

The chart below gives general guidelines of sound mastery. The guidelines allow for the different developmental speech milestones that children experience.

90% of Children Have Mastered These Sounds...By Age

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|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| p, d, m, w, h, n | 2 years old |
| t, b, k, g | 3 years old |
| f, v, y | 4 to 5 years old |
| s, z, j, l, r, sh, ch, th, blends | 5 to 7 years old |

Resource

Mawhinney, Linda and McTeague, Mary Scott. (2004) Early Language Development. Greenville: Super Duper Publications.