



## Speech Errors are Typical as Children Develop Speech

Speech errors are very typical in children 3 to 5 years of age. Most 4 year olds produce some speech errors. A child who produces one or two sounds incorrectly could be considered 'typically developing'. A child who produces a few errors may still be developing. However, a 4 year old who produces many speech errors may require intervention. As a general rule, children use understandable (although not perfectly correct) speech by age 4.

## What is the Normal Mastery of Speech Sounds?

The ages when most (90%) children have mastered each sound:

	Girls	Boys
At 2-3 years of age:	b, d, h, m, p, w	b, h, m, n, p, w
At 3-4 years of age:	f, k, g, n, t, y	d, f, k, g, t
At 4-5 years of age:	l	y
At 5-6 years of age:	ch, j, sh, th, v	l, v
At 6-7 years of age:		ch, j, sh
At 7-8 years of age:	r, s, z	r, s, th, z

## What You Can Do to Foster Speech Sound Development in Children

It is important for adults to learn how to ACT on speech sound development while remembering to respond to 'what the child says' before responding to 'how the child says it'.

When we cue children to make speech sounds they learn the real reason to change their speech pattern, so their spoken message is understood. We help children learn to say speech sounds a number of ways:

**Child's Says:** "I see a wion."

Facilitation Technique	Caregiver Response
<b>Provide a Good Model</b>	Emphasize the speech sound as you repeat, "A llion?"
<b>Provide a Visual Cue</b>	Point to your lips and say, "Watch me, llion."
<b>Provide a Verbal Cue</b>	"Listen to the /lll/ sound. My tongue makes the /lll/. Listen, llion."
<b>Provide Feedback</b>	"I heard the /w/ sound when you said llion."
<b>Provide Correction</b>	"Lllion. Let's try that again, say llion."
<b>Communication Breakdown</b>	"Wion?"

## Before Consulting a Speech/Language Pathologist—Gather Information

- When a child's sounds are noticeably different from children of the same age, listen for error sounds and compare with the normal mastery of speech sounds chart (above).
- Try some of the speech facilitation techniques listed above.
- Is the child able to produce the error sound correctly with a little help?
  - If so, the child is learning to say the sound and may just need more practice and facilitation within everyday conversations.
  - If not, talk with (parents, child care providers) about your concerns to see if they are noticing the same speech errors.
- If the child is not able to make age appropriate sounds, initiate a request for assistance.