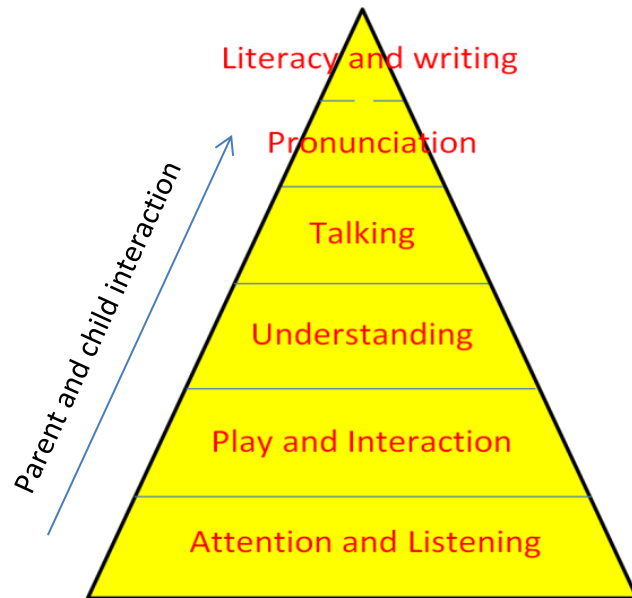


Communication Development Pyramid



Concerned about your child's speech?

Contact Sam (Specialist Speech and Language Therapist at Chatty Chipmunks) to arrange a FREE no obligation 15 minute wellbeing chat to discuss your concerns and how we can help.

Phone: 07425 914487

Email: sam@chattychipmunks.co.uk

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**Speech sound
development:
A guide for parents worried
about their child's
pronunciation skills**



What do we mean by 'speech sounds'?

By 'speech sounds' we mean how a child is pronouncing words. For example, your child may say "dog" as "dod".

All children make mistakes with pronunciation as they learn to talk. They normally replace harder sounds with easier sounds to say, in quite a uniform way. However some children may make unusual errors or the errors may persist for longer than we would expect. These children may need some speech and language support.

Typical speech sound development

Parents and familiar adults should understand most of their child's speech by around 3 years old. Unfamiliar adults should be able to understand most of what a 4 year old is saying.

Age	Typical sounds	Typical errors
By 3 years	m, n p, b, t, d w, h f, s	Your child may miss out sounds at the end of words, e.g. "hou" for "house". /s/ may still sound like /th/
3 – 4 years	As before, now including:- ng (as in <u>thing</u>) k, g v, z l, y	Your child may still say things like "tat" for "cat" and "date" for "gate". /s/ may still sound like /th/
4 – 5 years	As before, now including:- sh, ch zh (as in <u>measure</u>), j	/s/ may still sound like /th/
5-7 years	As before, now including:- r th (as in <u>think</u>) th (as in <u>those</u>)	/r/ may still be pronounced as /w/ until around 6 ½ years.

What to do if you have any concerns

If you are concerned about your child's talking please contact us for a FREE 15 minute consultation. Research shows that early intervention results in the best outcomes.

We can offer your child a thorough assessment of their speech skills, and therapy if this is required. In the meantime there are things that you can do at home to support your child's pronunciation skills:-

- Repeat back your child's words using the correct pronunciation. E.g. if your child says "tat", you say "yes, that's a cat!"
- Be face to face with your child when talking so that your child can see the shape of your mouth as you're talking.
- Play around with sounds together, e.g. "snakes go hissssss". Be face to face with your child, or better still, look in a mirror together as you do this. That way your little one may self-correct their mouth position to match yours.
- Do not let your child know that they are saying words incorrectly. Instead encourage your child to use other skills to get their meaning across. Say things like "My ears aren't working today. Can you speak more slowly for me?" Or "Silly mummy, I don't understand. Can you show me?"
- Do not ask your child to repeat words back to you. This may increase anxiety and make your child lose confidence in talking.

Remember to focus on WHAT your child is saying (language), not just HOW they are saying it (pronunciation). If your child's language is delayed, this may need to be the focus of speech and language therapy before we can work on pronunciation skills.