



Speech Sounds



WHAT TO EXPECT

There is a pattern of speech development that most children follow. While there is a range which each sound is learned, one good measure/indicator is how well your child is understood. Someone who does not know your child should be able to understand:

- 50% of what a 2 year old says
- 75% of what a 3 year old says
- 90% of what a 4 year old says
- 95% of what a 5 year old says (may be some errors with grammar still)

When to be concerned:

- Dropping sounds (especially initial sounds - "un" for "sun" or after the age of 3)
- Using one or two sounds everywhere

How to Help Your Child With Their Pronunciation

Avoid asking your child to repeat something if you have understood what he/she has said. Instead, try some of the tips below:

- Let your child know that you are listening and trying to understand them.
- **Model** and **emphasize** correct sounds in words instead of pointing out errors (e.g., Child: "I want **toop**"; Adult: "Oh, you want some **ssssoup**?")
- **Avoid saying "say"**: don't ask your child to repeat words after you (Do not tell your child: "Say it like this..." or "It's not toop, it's soup; now you say soup").
- Provide **LOTS of praise** for trying, even if he did not say the sound correctly (e.g., "You are really trying hard", or "Good try on the **ssss** sound. That was really close").

Fun ways to work on sounds:

- **While reading books**, emphasize words that have the sound your child is struggling with. Bonus if you pick a book that has the sound often (e.g. "Brown Bear, Brown Bear" is great for the "b" sound).
- **Seek and Find**: Fill a bin with rice or pasta. Find several toys that start with the same sounds and hide them in the bin. Have your child search through the bin, when they pull out a toy, label it "You found the **car**" or let your child.

What if I can't understand my child?

- Watch your child's actions and expressions for cues
- Give them a "choice", so you know what they could be trying to say (e.g., instead of asking "What do you want to eat?" ask "Do you want a carrot or a cookie?")
- Use "yes/no" questions to get more information (e.g., "Is it a toy?", "Do you play with it outside?").
- Repeat the parts you did understand to learn more (e.g., "You are talking about ice cream. Tell me more. What do you want to tell me about it?")
- Ask your child to "show" you what he is talking about.
- Honesty pays. Sometimes you can't understand your child. It is ok to say this to your child. (e.g., "I am really trying but I don't understand what you are saying").

Hearing is crucial!

Babies in New Brunswick are screened at birth but many things can change after that can affect hearing (repeated ear infections, wax build up, fluid, etc).

If your child isn't hearing the sounds clearly then they may not be able to make them.

You don't need a referral to have your child's hearing tested, contact your local audiologist:

- Upper River Valley Hospital: 375-2586
- Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital: 452-5931



Need more info?

Contact us and we can send you more information:

talkwithmewoodstock@nbed.nb.ca
1-866-423-8800

talkwithmefredericton@nbed.nb.ca
1-877691-8800