


**After Hours** ★  
**Pediatrics** ★  
 ★ **URGENT CARE**



★ Infants through age 21    ★ No appointment necessary  
 ★ On-site lab and x-ray    ★ Most insurance accepted

★ **New Sanford Location!** ★  
 The Marketplace at Seminole Towne Ctr.  
 1481 W. P. Ball Blvd.  
 Sanford, FL 32771  
 407.323.3491

<b>Altamonte Springs</b> 407.332.6113	<b>Waterford Lakes</b> 407.273.4132
<b>Hunters Creek</b> 407.850.3797	<b>Windermere</b> 407.363.5753

## CONCERNED

## ABOUT SPEECH DEVELOPMENT?

Many times parents ask me when they should be concerned about their child's speech development. Often times they are brushed off by their pediatricians and family members who tell them that the child will "grow out of it". While this is often true because most children do make mistakes while learning to make sounds, sometimes intervention by a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist is needed.

It is important that parents keep in mind that speech development is a process that occurs in a sequence, with sound acquisition occurring at different ages. Just like we wouldn't expect a 6 month old to walk, we wouldn't expect a 2 year old to correctly make the /r/ sound. By the age of 8 we would expect that a child can make all speech sounds correctly.

There are certain factors that may negatively affect the way that a child produces sounds. One is mouth breathing rather than breathing through the nose. When a person breathes through their nose their tongue is at the top of their mouth where it

should 'rest'. The tongue is a big muscle and when a child breathes through their mouth it is flat and pushing their lower jaw out. This can misalign their jaw and decrease the strength of their tongue affecting sound production. One of the best ways for a parent to judge if their child breathes through their nose or mouth is to observe them watching TV because this is a time that the child is typically very relaxed.

A child with a cleft palate or lip would have a difficult time producing various sounds. This is usually diagnosed at birth and corrected surgically.

Sometimes a child may not be able to achieve full range of motion with their tongue or lips. This may be due to muscle weakness. These are vital structures to correctly produce speech sounds.

It is very important that the child's hearing be screened. If a child is unable to hear sounds they can not be expected to be able to produce them correctly. Babies now have a hearing screening at birth, but that was a snapshot at that time. Ear infections can temporarily affect hearing. The child may appear to hear sounds like a pot banging, but are they able to discriminate between the high frequency sounds of s and v? Hearing loss impacts language development as well.

If a parent continues to be concerned about speech and language development they should contact a certified Speech-Language Pathologist for a comprehensive evaluation. A list of SLPs in your area may be found at [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org).

Courtney Mullins is a Speech-Language Pathologist residing in Lake Mary with her

