

early language development

how do children learn to talk?

Learning to talk is a difficult process, and takes young children years to get to the point where they can engage in general conversation. The following checklist gives some idea of what young children are generally able to do, at what ages...

AGE	LANGUAGE SKILLS
6 months	plays at making sounds or noises while alone or with others, and babbles to get attention. vocalises eagerness, displeasure, while playing with toys...
12 months	able to say "mum" and "dad", as well as one or two other words.
18 months	uses 10 - 20 "real" words, along with a great deal of "jargon" - made-up words are used as though they formed part of a real conversation. copies many words heard in conversation.
2 years	starting to join 2-3 words together into a sentence.
2 1/2 years	rapid vocabulary expansion - can say 500+ words.
3 years	starting to use more complex grammar, in sentences of 4 - 5 words.
4 years	routinely converses in sentences, bosses and criticises others.

why is she slow to talk?

Children may be slow to develop spoken language for the following reasons:

- a history of ear infections and mild hearing loss.
- there may be no need to talk.
- siblings anticipate what the child wants.
- the child gets what she wants by using actions, pointing,

- a lot of energy may be placed into developing excellent skills in other areas of learning.
- the muscles in the mouth may not be adequately developed to make speech sounds clearly.
- general developmental delay.
- sometimes there is simply *no* tangible reason!

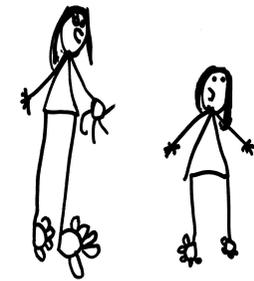
when to refer:

- when a family is concerned about their child's speech or language.
- the child is acting aggressively or frustrated trying to communicate.
- the child is having difficulty understanding what is being said to them, or has difficulty following instructions.
- the child is not using single words by 18mths of age.
- the child is not using 2 word sentences by 2 1/2 years of age.
- the child has limited vocabulary compared to their peers.
- the child's speech is difficult to understand at 3 years of age.
- the child is having difficulty interacting with peers.
- the child's speech has stuttering behaviours.

for more information contact:

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talking together



speech pathology

speech pathology service
for preschool aged
children

utilising play and



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preschool speech and language services

Talking together specialises in providing child-focused speech pathology for children up to school age that is inclusive, fun and effective.

We encourage working collaboratively with parents, carers, teachers and other professionals. The service provides assessment and intervention for children with difficulties in:

- speech sound development
- language development
- language development when English is the second language
- social skills and interaction
- autism spectrum disorders
- stuttering

Talking together speech pathology uphold the beliefs based on Speech Pathology Australia's best practice.

These include:

- being a child focused practice, always acting in their best interest.
- providing motivational and age appropriate therapy.
- providing a comfortable and safe therapy environment.
- to clearly explain therapy goals, services & outcomes.
- providing a professional, ethical and compassionate approach to every child and their family

children's speech development

why is talking so hard?

As children, we all went through the complex process of developing communication skills. As adults, we take these skills for granted, and often forget just how difficult the learning process really is.

Try to think what you do to make the "k" sound. What about when you say "r" or "s"? The lips, tongue, throat and mouth need to be well co-ordinated to produce the complicated movements required for all the different sounds of speech.

is it just laziness when my child doesn't talk properly?

NO! Laziness is never the cause of a speech problem, because everyone wants to be understood.

Communication is one of the most important parts of being human, and not being able to communicate effectively can be very frustrating.

There are many rewards for getting your message across, and being understood. Clear speech allows children to:

- mix with other people
- ask for things they need (or want!)
- say "no"
- complain
- make friends, and be part of a group

These everyday experiences are powerful motivation for clear and understandable speech and language. Few children therefore, would choose to be hard to understand.

so why can she say some words but not others?

During the process of developing speech, children go through stages when they can say a small number of words quite clearly, while others remain unclear. Some words may actually sound nothing like they are meant to!

Parents often think "If my child can say some words correctly shouldn't all the words be clear?". Some words are easier than others however, as children generally learn different sounds at different stages.

CHECKLIST

75% of Australian children can say these sounds at these ages:

3 years: p b m w h t d n

4 years: f l sh y k g

5 years: ch s z j

6 years: r v & double sounds like "bl" or "fr"

7- 8 years: th

Sometimes children can say a sound by itself, but cannot remember to use it in their conversation. They may be able to say the sounds at the start of a word but not at the end. Often children may be able to say a word while copying you, but forget when you're not around to show them. This is all a normal part of learning speech.

if you are concerned, make a referral to a speech pathologist - the sooner your child receives help, the more successful therapy is likely to be.