

Does my child speak clearly?

Learning to speak clearly can take a very long time. A child needs to learn to practise talking, in different situations and with different people.

Remember that speaking is a very individual skill. Your child may not learn at the same time and in the same way as his friends or brothers and sisters.

Many children cannot say all speech sounds until around the age of seven.

The “r” and “th” sounds are the latest to develop.

General advice

- If your child has difficulty saying a word, say clearly back to your child what he has tried to say. This way he can listen to how an adult says the sounds. Also, you will have let him know he was understood.
- Listen and respond to *what* your child is trying to say and not *how* he is saying it.
- Your child is not being lazy; he would say words clearly if he could. Sometimes children use signs and gestures to help get their message across, and this is ok.
- Try not to draw attention to your child’s speech by commenting on it in front of him.
- Give your child the opportunity to mix and play with children of his own age.

For further information please contact your local Speech and Language Therapy Department.