

Does my child speak clearly?

Learning to speak clearly can take a very long time. A child needs first to learn to practise communicating and to gain self-confidence in non-speaking and speaking situations.

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 siblings.

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

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

General advice

- It is not helpful to correct your child’s speech by telling him that he is wrong or by getting him to say it again. Instead, you should 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 pronounce words clearly if he could.
- It is hurtful 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.
- Encourage your child not to suck on a dummy or bottle during the day.