Southern Health and Social Care Trust

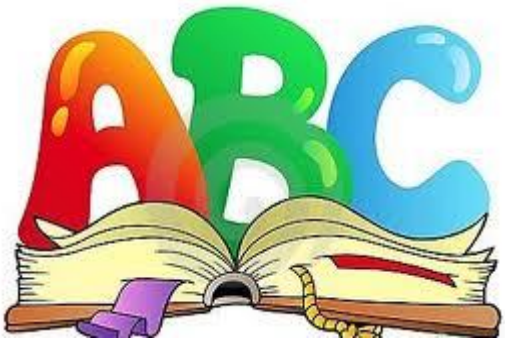
Speech and Language Therapy Service

Information for Parents

Source: Early Support – Helping Every Child Succeed DfES Publication 2005

Speech Sound Development

The following chart gives an overview of speech sound development.



The early sounds made by babies and toddlers include a variety of speech and non-speech sounds.

Over time, children develop their ability to use the speech sounds of their first language in words.

There is variation in the rates at which different children develop speech sounds. However, based on research and clinical practice, the following table shows when sounds are used spontaneously, or when their use can be encouraged.

Sounds are usually treated at the upper level of normal age acquisition, or six months later.

Research shows that boys are slower to develop speech sounds.

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Speech Sound Development

Age	Sounds
6-12 months	Babble (varied consonants and vowels)
1-2 years	p, b, t, d, m, n, w – as in Mama, bye, ta ta
3 years	h – as in home, ng – as in sing
3 years 6 months	s – as in sun f – as in four, phone
4 years	c,k – as in car, bake g – as in goose, pig l – as in look, lady
4 years 6 months	Double consonants are being used. In English these are double consonants with 'l', eg bl – as in blue; pl – as in plate; fl – as in fly; cl/kl – as in cloud; gl – as in glass Also double consonants with 's', eg sp – as in spoon; st – as in star; sk – as in skip; sl – as in slip; sm – as in smoke; sn – as in snap; sw – as in sweet Final clusters, eg mp – as in stamp y – as in yes
5 years	sh – as in shop, push ch – as in witch, chip j – as in jug Many children outgrow a lisp in their fifth year.
5 years 6 months	v – as in van z – as in zip
7 years	r – as in rabbit, parrot th – as in thumb, birthday