

When are Speech Sounds Learned?

Many children make errors when they pronounce words. Most children learn how to say all of the speech sounds correctly by the time they are eight years old. Some sounds are easier to say than other sounds. These are usually the sounds that children learn first. The following table shows the typical age range when children learn each sound.

	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years
p puppy, up							
m mom, drum							
h house							
n no, man							
w water							
b baby, tub							
k cookie, duck							
g gum, dog							
d daddy, bed							
t toe, hat							
ng singer, ring							
f four, off							
y yes							
r red, bird, car							
l lion, balloon, smell							
s soap, bus							
ch chair, watch							
sh shoe, fish							
z zoo, buzz							
j jump							
v van, love							
th thumb, tooth							
th the, mother							
zh measure, beige							

Each bar begins when 50% of children can use the sound correctly.

Each bar ends when 90% of children use the sound correctly.

From Sander, 1972.
(Used with permission.)

Speech-language pathologists use the following milestones as a general guideline:

- By age 3 years: p, m, h, n, w
- By age 4 years: b, k, g, d, f, y
- By age 6 years: t, ng, r, l
- By age 7 years: ch, sh, j, th (thumb)
- By age 8 years: s, z, v, th (the), zh

For ideas on how you can help your child learn speech sounds, call your speech-language pathologist.

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