

## **Your Child's Speech and Language Development**

**Speech** refers to the ability to make individual sounds correctly and to then put individual sounds together to make words. Children with speech (**articulation or phonology**) delays typically have difficulty with specific sounds, sequencing sounds, or being understood.



Children develop speech sound clarity as the muscles of their mouths gain increased control, coordination and strength, and as their brains learn to hear speech sounds. Therefore, as a child matures, so should his ability to be understood. It is estimated that approximately 10% of children have speech sound difficulties.

Listed below are a few suggested developmental guidelines for acquiring speech sounds. Any speech sound errors can make it difficult for your child to be understood. If your child has difficulty with 2 or more sounds, or your child is omitting or replacing any speech sounds ( e.g. "poon" or "foon" for "spoon") a speech-language assessment should be pursued.

Speech sounds typically used correctly in conversation:

- By age 2: p, m, b, h, n, w,
- By age 3: k, g, d, t, ng, y
- By age 4-5: f, v, l, sh, ch, j
- By age 5-7: r, th, zh, *S*, *Z*



**Language** is referred to as **receptive language** (how we understand language, questions, directions, basic concepts) and **expressive language** (how we talk using words to communicate ideas, thoughts, comments, questions).

A child's language skills develop with age. Typically, children should be using two word sentences by the time they are 2 years old. By the time they are 3 years, children should have a vocabulary of approximately 900 words and use longer sentences, ask and answer questions, and use language to communicate their wants and needs. Here are some general questions to ask yourself about your child's language skills, which may indicate that a speech-language assessment is warranted.

Early identification and remediation is the key to minimizing the effects of a communication difficulty. If you have a sense that someone you know may benefit from working with a Speech-Language Pathologist, you are probably right.



Does your child ...

- use grammatically correct sentences (pronouns, verb tenses etc)?
- play cooperatively with other children and understand social cues?
- ask and answer questions appropriately and follow 2 step directions?
- understand basic concepts?

Alberta Health Care covers speech and language assistance through the Calgary Health Region, Care in the Community. Call 943-9830 for more information.

Speech language pathologists in private practice are also available to help. To find a registered speech pathologist in private practice contact the Alberta Speech Language Association of Private Practitioners @ 780-988-2217 or visit [www.asapp.ca](http://www.asapp.ca) . Or chat with your child's preschool teacher as the preschool may already have contract services from a speech language pathologist.

**Speech Language Assessment & Therapy Services**  
**403-660-0984**

**Special interest in preschool and school age communication difficulties**