



School Readiness Tip Sheet

Articulation Concerns

Most children make some mistakes as they learn to say new words. Children usually correct their mispronunciations as they mature. Children with articulation disorders might do one or more of the following: delete sounds (child says, “bu” instead of “bus”), substitute or distort sounds (child says, “sree” instead of “three”), add sounds (child says, “spagbetti” instead of “spaghetti”).

The older the child, the more sounds he or she can say correctly. Most children should be able to say the listed sounds by the following ages:

By 3 years old: h, w, m, n, b, p
By 8-9 years old: r, s, z, th

By 4 years old: d, t, k, g, y, n

By 6 years old: l, v, sh, ch, j

Promoting Clear Speaking Skills:

- Use good speech when talking with children and avoid using “baby talk”. Talk in real conversation with your child; take turns speaking, use eye contact and really listen to what he or she says.
- When your child mispronounces a word, just say it correctly, when you respond. For example, if your child says, “I hear the darbage truck”, you can repeat by saying, “Oh, yes! I hear the garbage truck, too!”
- Check your child’s hearing ability. If children have frequent colds or a history of ear infections, they may not be hearing all the sounds around them.
- Enjoy making up nonsense words that use the sounds your child is not yet saying correctly. This gives your child a chance to make the sounds without getting the word “wrong”. Be sure to try to say the nonsense words your child makes up!
- Minimize background noise and distractions when speaking with children. Turning off the TV or music helps your child focus on the sounds and words.
- If you cannot understand a child, repeat the part that was understandable. If the child says, “My brother’s coming down the dreet”, you can respond by saying “Oh, your brother’s coming down the...?”

This way, the child can attempt to fill in the misunderstood word.

- Ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions cannot just be answered by “yes” or “no”. Examples of open-ended questions: “Where did you go?” “What did you like about it?” “Tell me more about ...?”

- If you have continuing concerns about your child’s speech ask your child’s teacher for more information.

