

ARTICULATION

Articulation refers to the production of the speech sounds. Accurate articulation involves precise movement of the articulators including the tongue, lips, alveolar ridge, velum, and jaw coordinated with correct air flow and voicing.

A child may have an articulation disorder if he/she demonstrates any of the following signs:

- Unclear speech with poor intelligibility
- Mispronunciations of certain consonant sounds
- Lipping (lipping is a speech disorder characterized by the inability to correctly pronounce the sounds of 's' or 'z'. Usually these sounds substituted by 'th' sound)
- Persistent difficulty with particular words/sounds

There are many possible reasons why a child could be making incorrect sounds for his/her age. When children have multiple/chronic ear infections as an infant/toddler, this puts them at risk for developing a speech sound delay. A child may have weak muscles, or even a structural problem (i.e. cleft palate) contributing to the articulation errors. For some children, the cause may be related to general developmental delay, delayed cognitive development or even due to an unknown reason. These factors are common causes of speech problems, but not an exhaustive list.

An articulation disorder involves problems making sounds. Sounds can be substituted, left off, added or changed. These errors may make it difficult for one to be well-understood. Most children make some mistakes as they learn to say new words. An articulation disorder occurs when mistakes continue past the expected age.

What sounds do children say and when?

AGE	Your child will probably use these sounds
1 ½ - 2 years	m, n, p, b, t, d
2 ½ - 3 years	m, n, p, b, t, d, f, w, y, h
3 - 4 years	m, n, p, b, t, d, k, g, f, v, s perhaps sh
4 - 5 years	m, n, p, b, t, d, f, v, s, z, sh, ch, j, w, l, y, h Blends may start to develop e.g. 'sp', 'st', 'bl', 'cr'



(Henrietta McLachlan and Liz Elks 2007)

The Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) listens to the child and may use a formal articulation test to record sound errors. An oral mechanism examination is also done to determine whether the muscles of the mouth are working correctly. The SLP may recommend speech treatment if the sound is not appropriate for the child's age or if it is not a feature of a dialect or accent.

Articulation treatment may involve demonstrating how to produce the sound correctly, learning to recognize which sounds are correct and incorrect, and practicing sounds in different words.

Process of articulation therapy: Sound in isolation, in syllables, in words, in sentences, in stories, in conversation.



SPEECH THERAPY FOR KIDS

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