

Learning Speech Sounds Takes Time

Articulation skills are the complex coordinated movements used to make different speech sounds. Developing these skills is a gradual process that has many steps. As children grow older, they produce more sounds accurately. While learning to speak, all children make mistakes and produce some sounds incorrectly. These errors can take many forms. For example a child may have a substituting error, such as saying wake for rake, or an omission error just like saying wagah for wagono. These types of errors commonly disappear as the child matures; however, some of these pronunciation errors can be signs of an articulation disorder. In other words a particular child may be making sound errors that are not usually made by children that age. The school speech-language pathologist can help distinguish between regular developmental errors and an articulation delay or disorder.

Children who continue to have difficulty with sounds after the specific ages (listed on the chart below) may be having difficulty with classroom work based on speaking difficulties. These students will be eligible for speech therapy. This service is most likely provided through one of the local schools during regular school hours.

Parents can help their children by echoing back correct productions of misspoken words without requiring the child to repeat it correctly when they may not be ready yet. Offering praise for correct productions or clear pronunciation as it happens, helps the child to improve and doesn't reduce their desire to talk and share.

