**Speech Sound Development**

A child’s speech sound system develops over the first 7-8 years of their life. It is a gradual process, and every child may acquire sounds at a different rate.

| Speech Sound | 90% of children will use this sound by: |
| --- | --- |
| m n p b t d w | 3 years |
| h y f | 4 years |
| s z k g ng | 4 – 5 years |
| v sh ch j I | 6 years |
| r zh th | 7 years |
| Clusters (br, sp, gl) | 8 years |

**There are several ways you can help:**

* Face your child when you are talking together. Sit opposite each other when playing or talking. This helps your child listen and see how sounds are made.
* Make quiet times. Turn off the television or radio when you are talking, playing or looking at books together. This will help your child to listen to your speech more easily.
* Encourage speech sounds in play- for example ‘ssss’ for snake, ‘ch ch’ for train, ‘shhh’ for sleeping, ‘t t t’ for a ticking clock, ‘wa wa’ for a siren.
* Accept your child’s attempt at a word and show them you understand but also repeat the correct version back to them. For example, if your child says “tup, mummy” (meaning “cup”), adult says: “yes, there’s your cup”.
* If you have not understood your child, try asking them to show you, to point, to draw you a picture or tell you in a different way. Offering a choice may also help- try saying ‘would you like an apple or a banana?’ rather than ‘what would you like to eat?’
* Model words back clearly without correcting your child. We want to encourage them to talk as much as possible to help them practise these sounds and maintain confidence in talking.
* Listen to your child with patience however unclear they are. Ask relatives or friends to do these things too. Talking should be fun, not hard work. Remember that your child is not being ‘lazy’- they are stuck in an earlier pattern of how to say the sound and it takes time to learn the new sound and remember to use it all of the time.

**The resources and links below contain activities you can carry out with your child to support their understanding and use of speech sounds:**

**Our website:**

First Call: <https://www.lincolnshirechildrenstherapyservices.nhs.uk/our-services/resource-library/first-call>

**See ‘Speech Sounds’ section**

**Videos:**

Syllables: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnWKA6bC2bI>

Rhyme: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfH3Ls9MQOQ

Everyday sounds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVlDRWJKQho>

Sounds in isolation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQZKJfqJ6XQ>

Initial sounds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBssU8ug7Ko>

**Speech Sound Activities for Early Years:**

[The Jolly Jellyfish - literacy aid (lincolnshire.gov.uk)](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/5265/jolly-jellyfish-book)

**If you have followed this advice and carried out activities on a regular basis and you remain concerned about your child’s speech, please contact the department again via our website -** <https://www.lincolnshirechildrenstherapyservices.nhs.uk/contact-us> **– or on 01522 309025.**