

CHILDREN WITH UNCLEAR SPEECH



**PRACTICAL
STRATEGIES TO
HELP IN THE
CLASSROOM**

Children develop speech sounds at different rates.

The table below shows the typical age at which sounds emerge, or when their use can be encouraged.

Research shows that often boys are slower to develop sounds than girls.

Age (Yrs)	Sounds used
1-2	p, b, t, d, m, n, w
3	h, ng
3 $\frac{1}{2}$	s, f
4	k, g, l
4 $\frac{1}{2}$	y Double consonants are being used, e.g. bl - as in 'blue', sp - as in 'spoon'; Final clusters, e.g. mp - as in 'stamp'
5	sh - as in 'shop', 'push' ch - as in 'witch', 'chip' j - as in 'jug' ʒ- as in 'measure' Many children outgrow a lisp in their fifth year.
5 $\frac{1}{2}$	v, z
7	r, th

Children who have difficulties developing these sounds may:

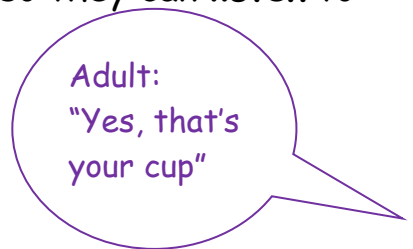
- become frustrated at not being understood and display challenging behaviour

- have difficulty with reading and spelling as they find it difficult to link sounds to letters correctly.
- become withdrawn and lack confidence

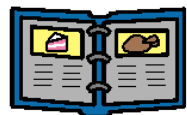
Strategies to help children in the classroom

You can help children with unclear speech by:

- listening carefully to them and waiting for them to tell you something, whatever way they can
- modelling clear speech
- repeat what the child has said so they can **listen** to the correct production



- getting to know specific words he/she is likely to use e.g. pets/siblings
- using a home-school diary so a parent can tell you about activities at home that the child may talk about
- encouraging the child to use gesture or point. Try saying 'Show me....'



- asking the child questions to help work out what they are trying to say
- not asking them to repeat words or sentences after you. They may not be ready to attempt the sound and this may affect their confidence
- playing games to encourage lip and tongue movements as these muscles are important for talking e.g. licking lollies, blowing bubbles, musical toys
- playing games involving sounds and rhymes e.g. I spy, Simon Says.

If you don't understand - don't pretend to!
Reassure the child and acknowledge that talking can be difficult e.g. "I think you are trying to say something hard and I am not sure what it is. Maybe we can find out later"

Remember it takes time to develop a
new speech sound and use it in
conversation. Be patient and practise
regularly!

