

# Speech Sound Development

## An Information Sheet for Parents



Speech is the production of sequences of sounds that make up words.

Children learn how to use speech sounds by listening to the sounds they hear in the languages around them.

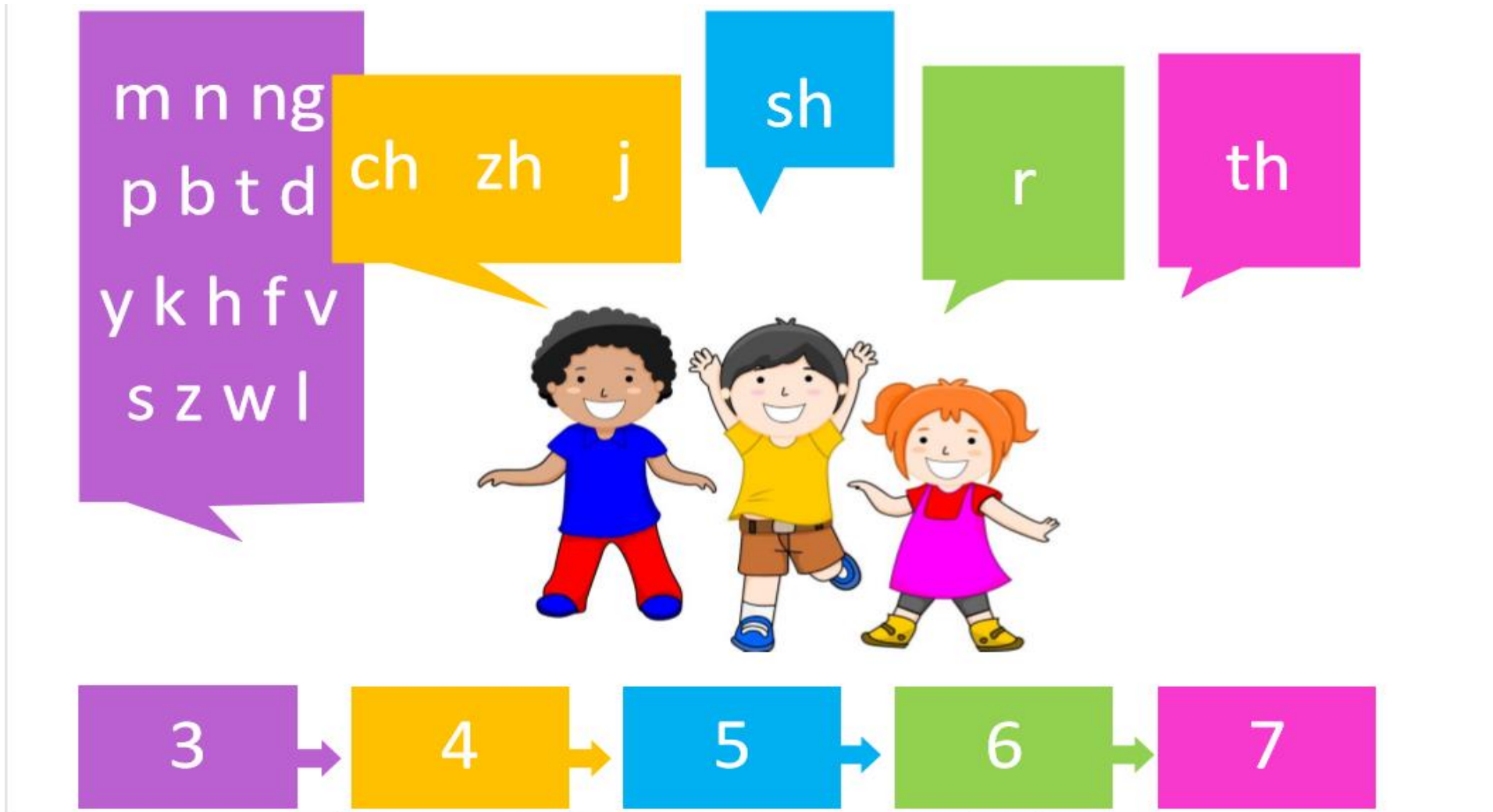
Children start by using babbled sounds and then move on to using sounds in words, sentences and conversations.

Children's use of speech sounds develops at different ages and they will not be able to use all of the speech sounds adults do straight away.

This information booklet highlights:

- The typical stages of speech development from 3-7 years (Page 2)
- Tips for supporting speech sound development (page 3)

## The Typical Stages of Speech Development from 3-7 years



\*90% of children acquire these sounds at the corresponding ages

Information modified from Dodd, B., Holm, A., Hua, Z., Crosbie, S. (2003) 'Phonological development: A normative study of British English speaking children', *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics*, 17(8), 617-643.

## Top Tips for Supporting Speech Sound Development



### Focus on the message

Listen to what your child is saying rather than how they are saying it and always respond to their message.



### Be Sympathetic

Take the blame if you can't understand e.g. 'Mummy's listening ears weren't switched on' or 'sorry, the TV was turned up too loud'.



### Model Clear Productions

Repeat what your child has said correctly. Don't ask your child to say the word properly, simply provide them with a good model of the word.



### Cue Others

Cue in unfamiliar listeners e.g. if your child is talking about a trip to the zoo and it is clear the listener is struggling to understand, you could say 'oh, you're telling Granny about our trip to the zoo and the lions we saw'. This ensures that your child is part of the conversation.



### Try to work it out

If you can't understand, ask your child to show you what they meant, or ask specific questions that might clue you in. If you can't understand, end the conversation helpfully e.g. 'maybe we'll work it out later'.



### Slow Down

Slowing your own rate of speech will allow your child to hear clear models of speech sounds and encourage your child to reduce their pace too, which can sometimes make their speech easier to understand.

Information informed by:

<https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n1177.pdf&ver=2130;>

[https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/activities-to-Encourage-speech-and-Language-Development/;](https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/activities-to-Encourage-speech-and-Language-Development/)

[https://nhsforthvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SLT-Tips-for-Communication-Development-in-Children.pdf;](https://nhsforthvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SLT-Tips-for-Communication-Development-in-Children.pdf)

<https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/slt/speech-and-sound-awareness-parents/>