

Early Developing Speech Sounds

(Later developing sounds such as *r, sh, ch, th, etc.* are not included)

General Information:

- For all sounds, start with meaningful words for your child. I.e. Functional words existing in your child's life or environment. An escalator is meaningless to a child who has never seen one. Animal and sibling names are good starters, if simple.
- Relating to labels or words that are concrete are easier than words that have no solid representation. For example, "sick" may be meaningless, but "tummy hurts" might be understood.
- Simple one-syllable words are easier to begin with than complicated multi-syllabic words. Ex. dog is easier than canine. Noodles or pasta is easier than spaghetti.
- The speech sounds in the developmental order given below are just a guide. Children will speak what is meaningful to them first, which may be words not listed here.
- Note that sometimes all of the sounds within the word will not be produced accurately at first, but with lots of practice this should improve over time. Your job is to always repeat the word appropriately.
- It is inconsistent as to whether initial sounds or final sounds are perfected first. Sometimes it depends on the sound, what surrounds the sound or it depends on the individual child.
- Please note that the lists of suggested words are only initial sound words. Children will likely also produce these sounds in the final and medial positions in words, such as *up, baby, and stop*.

p, b, m sounds are created by placing the lips together and presenting a stream of air. /p, b/ are created by a quick burst of air, where /m/ is created by a steady stream of air that partially escapes through the nasal cavity (feel the slight tickle in your nose as you produce the /m/). The difference between /p/ and /b/ is that /p/ is unvoiced (less airflow) and /b/ sound is voiced (more airflow). Place your hand on your throat as you produce the sounds to feel the difference.

Suggested Words:

/p/

pack	paw	peek	pig	puff
pail	pea	peep	pin	push
paint	peach	pen	pool	pup
park	pear	pet	pop	pull

- "Papa" is an easy beginning word

/b/

baa	bath	bee	bird	book
bad	bean	bell	baot	boot
ball	bear	bib	bone	boy
barn	bed	bike	boo	bug

- "Bye bye" is an easy target word that also carries a social context – closing a conversation.

/m/

mad	milk	mop	move
man	mine	more	mud
me	moon	mouse	mug
meat	moose	mouth	my

- "Mama" is easy for young ones!

/h/ This is an open production sound meaning there is no constriction within the mouth (just as vowels have no constrictions). Air is gently passed through the open mouth posture.

hair	hay	here	home	hot
ham	head	hi	honk	hug
hand	help	hide	hop	hurt
hat	hen	hit	horse	who

- "Happy" might be a fun beginning word.

/w/ This sound is slightly related to the above /p, b, m/ sounds because the lips are put together, but closure is not quite completed. Air is then passed through this narrow constriction.

whale	what	wheel	where	why
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- "What's that" may be an early question.

/n/ This sound is another nasal sound, like /m/. The tongue tip is placed on the roof of the mouth, just behind the top front teeth and a small amount of air is passed through the nasal cavity (feel the tickle in your nose as it is produced).

gnome	nap	nice	none
knee	neck	night	nose
knife	need	no	now
nail	nest	noise	nurse

- "No-no" and "night-night" are often beginning /n/ words.

'y' This sound is hidden within the mouth, but exhibits a high front tongue position. Air is passed slowly over the tongue as it is slightly cupped in the center.

use	yam	yap	yes	you
yak	yank	yell	yolk	yum

- "Yucky" might be a beginning meaningful word and "yes" is positive!

t, d These sounds are made by tapping the tongue tip on the roof of the mouth just behind the top front teeth. The difference between /t/ and /d/ is that /t/ is unvoiced (less airflow) while the /d/ sound is voiced (more airflow). You can feel a difference by placing your hand on your throat as you produce the sounds.

/t/

tack	talk	tea	tip	tongue
tag	tank	tears	toad	top
tail	tap	teeth	toast	toy
take	tart	tent	toe	tug

- "Toto", the dog in *The Wizard of Oz*, may be an early word carrying significant meaning for some.

/d/

dad	deep	dip	dog	door
dance	deer	dirt	doll	duck
dark	den	dish	done	dude
day	dig	do	don't	dump

- "All done" is a great beginning word combination to indicate the cognitive concept of finished.

k, g These sounds are made by humping up the tongue in the back and quickly tapping the tongue on the roof of the mouth. The difference between /k/ and /g/ is that /k/ is unvoiced (less airflow) while the /g/ sound is voiced (more airflow). You can feel a difference by placing your hand on your throat as you produce the sounds.

/k/

cab	call	car	coat	comb	corn
cage	camp	card	cob	come	cow
cake	can	cart	cold	cone	cub
calf	cap	cat	colt	cool	cup
keep	kick	kids	kings	keeper	kiss
key	kid	king	kite	kicker	kitten

- "Can't" is a powerful beginning word.

/g/

game	get	give	good
gas	ghost	go	goose
gate	gift	goat	got
geese	girl	gone	gum

- "All gone" is a beginning concept indicating knowledge that something is no longer present.

/f/ This sound is produced by placing the top front teeth onto the lower lip and passing a stream of air through the constriction. The /f/ sound is the same as /v/ sound (the voiced twin), but /v/ is a later developer and will not be covered on this list.

/f/

face	farm	feed	fight	fire	fizz
foot	fair	fast	feet	fin	fish
foal	fork	fan	fat	fence	find
fit	foam	fun	far	fawn	fig
fur	fix	food	phone	four	five

- "Fuzzy" is a fun first word.

/l/ This sound is somewhat varied, especially depending on what precedes or follows it. However, generally it is made by placing the tongue just behind the top front teeth and passing air through the constriction. Keep in mind that /l/ is a later developer.

/l/

luck	leaf	lid	lick	light	lie
lump	leg	lots	last	look	low
large	love	lazy	lamb	line	lip
lamp	lost	lion	lean	long	leopard
link	lake	limb	loop	lock	lunch
log	line	ladder	loose	lay	little

- "Love" is a powerful first word we all wait for.

/s/ This sound is produced by passing air over the top and front of the tongue out through slightly closed teeth. The tongue should not protrude out of the mouth as this will produce a lisping sound. Air should not flow over the sides of the tongue as this will produce a lateral, or sloppy (like Daffy Duck or Sylvester Cat) sound.

/s/

cell	sap	set	sod	cent	sat
sew	soft	sack	save	sick	some
sad	saw	side	son	safe	scent
sigh	song	sag	sea	sill	soot
said	seal	sing	sore	sail	search
sink	sound	sale	seat	sip	soup
salt	see	sit	sow	Sam	seed
size	sub	same	seep	soak	suds
sand	seize	soap	suit	sang	sell
soar	sun	sank	send	sock	surf

- "Sit" is a first early direction presented while "see?" is a fun early request.

/r/

** Of special note about learning to produce accurate /r/. Research has found that the tongue has the most rapid rate of growth between the ages of 5.5 – 7.5 years. While producing /r/, we rely totally on kinesthetic and proprioceptive feedback (i.e. we need to rely on feel vs. sight) because the tongue makes no contact anywhere in the mouth to produce /r/. During this rapid growth time, the feedback received may literally change from week to week. Therefore this makes it a more difficult sound to teach for correction at earlier ages. Because of the liquid nature of /r/, being heavily influenced by what surrounds it in a word production and the fact that it is a later developer, no words are included in this form.

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