

Speech and Language Therapy



Speech Sounds Information Session

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Aims of the Session:

For participants to:-

1. Have an overview of speech sound development and what can go wrong.
2. Have an understanding of key strategies and activities to support children with speech sound difficulties.

The Building Blocks of Speech

Speech is just part of the picture.

We need to consider children's speech sound development in the context of the rest of their development.



Adapted from a model used in many speech and language therapy services across the UK

Typical Speech Sound Development

Age	Sounds Acquired	Information and Examples of Typical Speech Sound Processes Present (not all speech sound processes included). (Age norms from Grunwell, 1987)
2 ½ - 3 years	m, n p, b, t, d, k, g w, y, h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speech usually understood by familiar adults, though still not always clear. - Stopping /f/, /s/ (up to around 3 years)- Using short sounds in place of /f/ and /s/. E.g. fish → "bish", sun → "dun" - Voicing errors- mixing up noisy and quiet sounds, e.g. p/b or /t/d E.g. pea → "bea"
3-4 years	f, s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speech should be understood by unfamiliar adults but still not perfect. - Final Consonant Deletion (up to around 3;3)- missing the last sound off words. E.g. cat → "ca" - Stopping /v/, /z/ (up to around 3;6) using short sounds in place of /v/ and /z/ E.g. van → "ban", zoo → "doo" - Fronting (up to around 3;6)- moving sounds made at the back of the mouth (/k/ or /g/) to the front. E.g. cat → "tat", go → "do"
4-5 years	v, z, sh, ch, j l	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speech will be understood most of the time. - Cluster reduction (Up to around 4 years) - Gliding (up to around 5 years)- replacing /l/ and /r/ with /w/ E.g. lego → "wego", red → wed. - Children may have difficulties with /th/ and /r/ until they are around 6 years. It is unlikely speech and language therapists would work on these sounds.

Typical Speech Sound Development (cont.)

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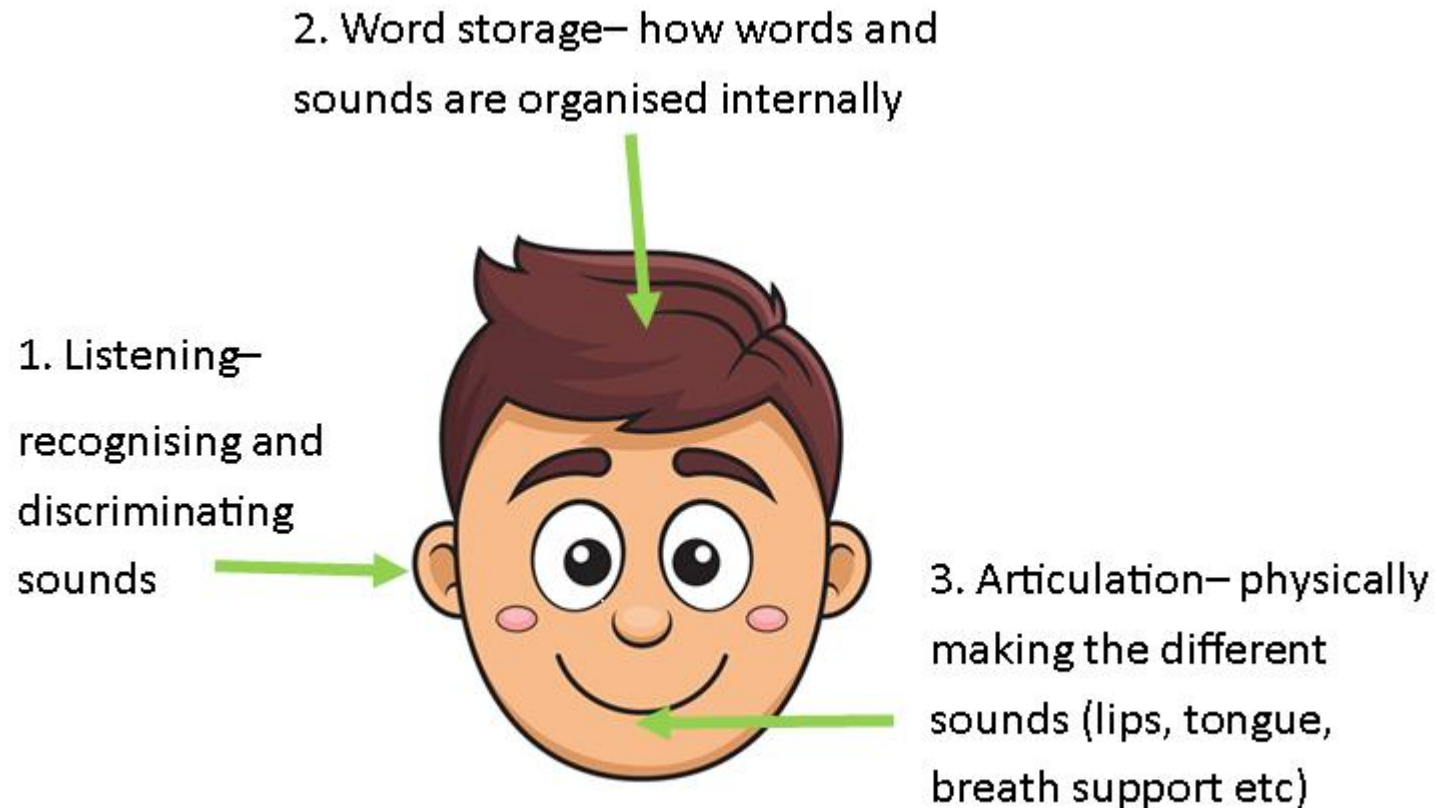
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What can go wrong- examples of disordered speech sound processes

Speech Process/Error	Example
Backing- replacing front sounds with back sounds	tea = "key" door = "goor"
Vowel distortion	bad = "bed" girl = "goal"
Sounds produced down the nose - air is pushed out of the nose instead of the mouth on certain sounds	Often happens on long sounds – s and s clusters, ch f j sh. - Can be a learned error, or can be to do with a physical/structural difficulty
Unique speech sound substitutions	Specific to the child e.g. teddy = "cheddy"
Developmental processes persisting much longer than usual	E.g. not using "long" sounds s and f at 5 years

Three areas impacting on Speech Sound Development



What can go wrong at each stage?

1. Listening

- Information not heard properly by children
- Children not discriminating sounds correctly
- Sounds that children have heard not being processed correctly

1. Listening—

recognising and
discriminating
sounds



How to support children with speech sounds difficulties

1. Listening

Any activities which focus on attention and listening-
(not just to speech sounds!) E.g.:

- Listening lotto
- Sound walks
- Simon Says
- Sound matching games e.g with instruments or environmental sounds
- Songs and nursery rhymes
- Letters and sounds phase 1 activities

1. Listening-

recognising and
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What can go wrong at each stage?

2. Word Storage

- Storing words with the incorrect “sound code”, so when they say the sound or word, they use the wrong sound, e.g. not differentiating between k and t.
- Phonological processes (i.e. typical processes such as missing sounds off the ends of words or not using “long” sounds) persisting for longer than usual

2. **Word storage**— how words and sounds are organised internally



How to support children with speech sounds difficulties

2. Word Storage

- Rhymes, e.g. nursery rhymes, songs
- Syllable clapping- clap or tap out the syllables in words
- Sounds treasure hunt- finding items starting with a certain sound
- Sounds bag- the child can pick out items from a bag which all have a certain sound at the start (the adult is naming the items, rather than the child)

Remember with these activities it is all about the adults modelling the sounds and words lots of times for the child to listen to (known as “auditory bombardment”)- at this stage we are not asking them to say the words or sounds themselves

2. **Word storage**— how words and sounds are organised internally



What can go wrong at each stage?

3. Articulation



3. Articulation– physically making the different sounds (lips, tongue, breath support etc)

- Difficulties co-ordinating muscles to produce specific sounds
- Structural difficulties meaning some sounds are difficult to produce, e.g. cleft palate

How to support children with speech sounds difficulties

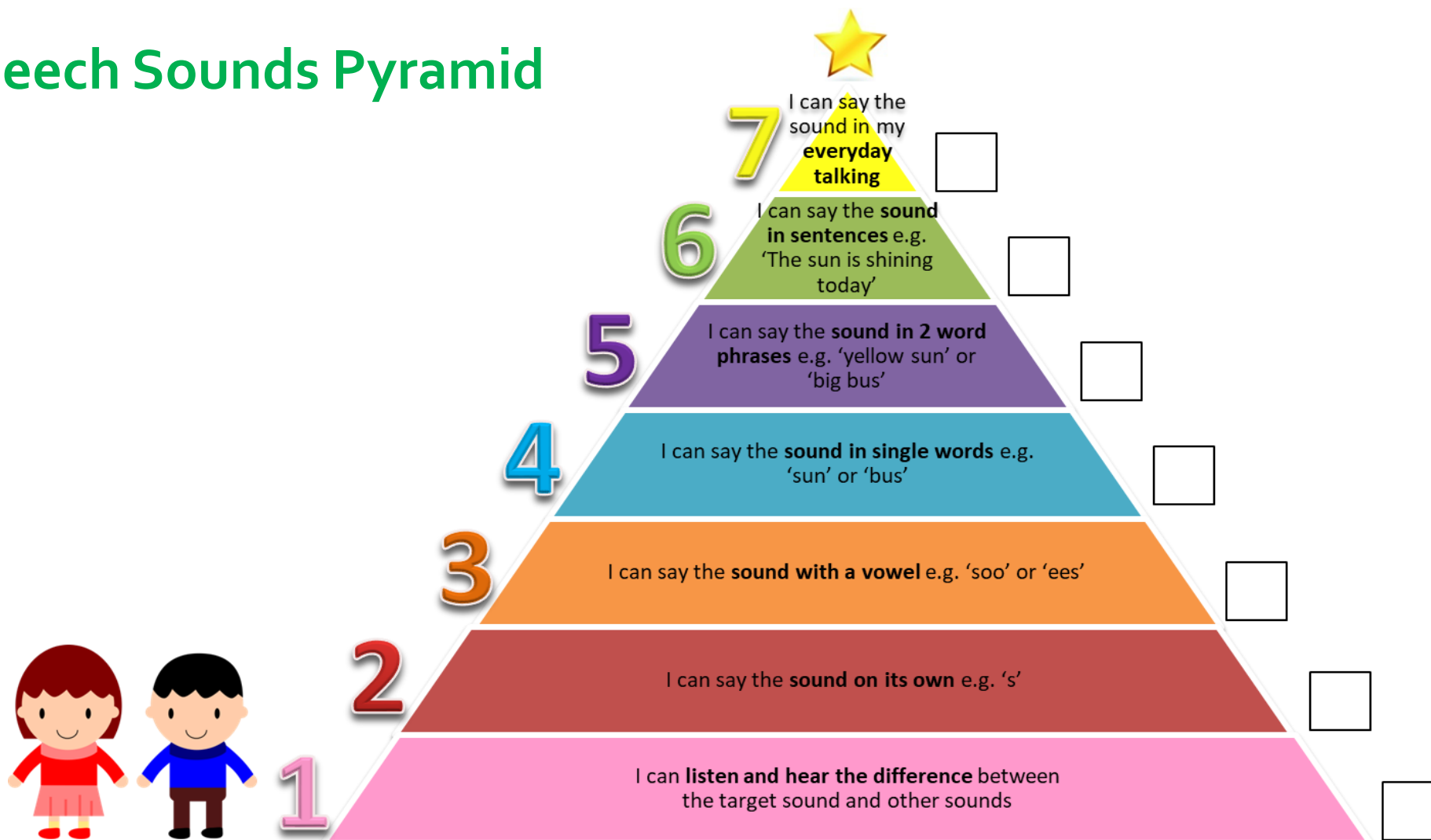
3. Articulation

- Any of the previous activities and strategies will be useful for children with articulation difficulties
- The Speech and Language Therapist will give you specific activities to work on with the child around certain sounds
- Remember the child may not be able to say certain sounds, so try not to put pressure on them to copy you back. Just provide lots of models of the words and sounds for them to hear.
- Making silly faces and sounds in front of the mirror can help children to start to think about what their mouth is doing for different sounds.



3. Articulation – physically making the different sounds (lips, tongue, breath support etc)

Speech Sounds Pyramid



General strategies to support speech sound development

- Be face to face
- Slow down your own rate of speech
- Say it as they would if they could- copy back what the child says correctly so they hear a good model. E.g. child: "I dot a tar" Adult: "Yes, you've got a car!".
- Don't put pressure on children to copy you back, as this may be too difficult for them. It is enough for them to hear you model the words for them.
- Try and reduce or cut out dummy use
- Focus on what the child is saying, rather than how they're saying it
- Encourage children to show you, or tell you in a different way

Other sources of information:

- <https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/talking-point/parents/resource-library-for-families/>
- Wellcomm Toolkit contains advice around supporting speech sounds
- Letters and Sounds phase 1 resources
- Published resources, e.g. www.elklan.co.uk, www.blacksheepress.co.uk, www.twinkl.co.uk
- Ring your link speech and language therapist- we're always happy to help!

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Any questions?