



BELINDA HILL
& Associates
SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS



Committed to developing communication in a fun, caring and dynamic environment

Practising Members of The Speech Pathology Association of Australia

Articulation/Phonology



What are Phonology and Articulation?

Phonology and Articulation are terms used to describe a child's sound production of consonants and vowels in words. We produce sounds by moving our articulators (tongue, lips and teeth) into various positions. We also change the airflow for some sounds, turn our voice on or off and move our soft palate up or down.

By various ages, children are expected to have mastered sounds in their system

Eg. By 3 years of age, a child should be accurately producing

**m *n *p *b *t *d *h *w *g *k*

Some children have difficulty producing certain sounds and may:

- Omit sounds eg. *ouse/house*
- Substitute sounds eg. *tat/cat*
- Distort sounds eg. Placing tongue between teeth for 's' instead of just behind the top teeth
- Add sounds eg. *balue/blue*
- Reduce longer words eg. *nana/banana*
- Have difficulty with producing sounds clearly in sentences in conversation

This may be caused by:

- Hearing impairment
- Developmental delay
- Speech delay
- Structural abnormalities (eg. Cleft palate)
- Motor Planning difficulties (eg. CAS – Childhood Apraxia of Speech)

We can help these children/students by:

- ✓ Modelling clearly to them how to produce a sound (showing where our tongue, lips and teeth should be), and perhaps using a mirror to show them how to position their articulations for a sound)
- ✓ Praising all attempts that the child makes to say the sound
- ✓ Gently reminding them, if they forget how to make the sound or cannot place their tongue in the correct position
- ✓ Early intervention – the earlier the sounds are remediated, the less likely the articulation/phonological problem may impair their early phonological awareness skills. Research suggests that children with speech disorders are more likely to develop reading and spelling difficulties
- ✓ Being patient and understanding
- ✓ Asking them to repeat what they have said, if it is unclear. It is important that we do not ignore their errors, but clarify any incorrect sound production and model the correct way.
- ✓ Explaining to others that the child has difficulty saying sounds and they may need to listen more carefully



If it is difficult to understand what they are communicating:

- ☺ Offer them a choice eg. “Do you want a biscuit or a muesli bar?” This makes it easier to work out which word they are saying
- ☺ Ask a yes/no question eg. “Did you go to the beach on Saturday?”
- ☺ Ask the child to show you what you are talking about/describing
- ☺ Acknowledge that you are having difficulties understanding their words but will come back to it, eg. “We will ask your teacher about that tomorrow”
- ☺ Introduce a visual communication system (pictures, photos, signs/gestures) to support and clarify the child’s communication attempts
- ☺ Encourage them not to rush but to take time to say words clearly

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