



Helpful Hints for Unclear Speech

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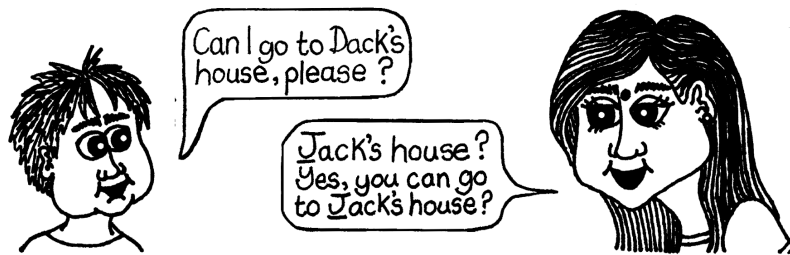
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Helpful hints for a child with unclear speech

- ✓ Listen to what the child says and not how he says it.
- ✓ Repeat back the words the child says correctly so that he hears good examples.



X Don't ask him to say the words again.

X Don't 'correct' his speech by saying 'no...it's Jack's house'.

X Don't pretend to understand. Instead, ask the child to show you, point to it or mime it.

- ✓ Think about using 'Special Time'. This involves just 5 minutes a day playing a game with the child or sharing a book. Turn off background noise so that the child can hear you easily.

What sounds do children say and when?

Age	Children usually use these sounds	Some children have difficulties with these sounds
2½ - 3 yrs	m, n, p, b, t, d f, s w, y, h	- Some long sounds like 's, f, v, sh' may not have developed so he may say 'bideo' for video or 'dun' for sun. - He may not use 'k' and 'g' sounds but use a 't' or 'd' instead so he may say 'dar' for car and 'det' for get.
3 - 4 yrs	m, n, p, b, t, d, k, g f, v, s perhaps sh w, y, h perhaps l	- By the age of four, a child needs to be using short 'p,t,k,' sounds and long 's,f,v,sh' sounds at the beginning and at the ends of words, otherwise his speech will be difficult to understand. - It is quite usual for blend sounds like 'sp', 'st', 'bl', 'cr' and difficult sounds like 'ch' and 'j' not be used yet.
4 - 5 yrs	m, n, p, b, t, d f, v, s, z, sh, ch, j w, l, y, h Blends may start to develop e.g. 'sp', 'st', 'bl', 'cr'	- Blend sounds like 'sp', 'st', 'bl', 'cr' may not have developed so he may say 'poon' for spoon, 'bue' for blue and 'cisps' for crisps. 'ch' and 'j' are difficult sounds. A child may say 'dumper' for jumper or 'dair' for chair. - A child's speech should be understood by unfamiliar adults.
6-7 yrs	All the speech sounds at the beginning, middle and ends of words should be used.	- Blends, 'ch' and 'j' can still be difficult for some children. - Children often don't learn to use 'th' or 'r' sounds until they are at least 6 yrs old. Many adults don't use these sounds either and it is unlikely that a speech and language therapist would work on these.

This represents the pattern when learning English. The development of sounds will vary with different languages