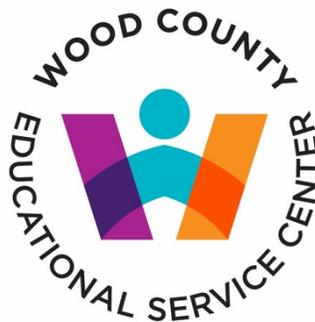


Let's Talk About Speech, Language, and Hearing Skills



A manual for families presented by the
Wood County Educational Service Center
Special Needs Department



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FORWARD

The speech-language pathologists provide important services to the children of Wood County. Problems in speaking and hearing can interfere with a child's academic and social growth, can be embarrassing, and can be a hindrance later in life. The speech-language pathologists in cooperation with the school and family assist children in achieving the best possible speaking and listening skills. To identify speech, language and hearing services in your school please contact the Wood County Educational Service Center at 419-354-9010.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak and the ability to hear are often taken for granted. However, we are aware that the ability to communicate meaningfully is a most complex and complicated process and perhaps the most important skill a child can master. This short booklet has been prepared to inform families about the development of speech, language, and hearing skills.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS MANUAL

1. To explain the development and acquisition of speech, language and hearing skills.
2. To provide information on the most common types of speech, language and hearing skills.
3. To guide families in general and specific ways they can encourage speech and language development.
4. To guide families in helping those with speech problems.
5. To inform families of the speech, language and hearing services available in the Wood County Schools and through other agencies in Wood County.

NORMAL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Speech and language skills are learned behaviors; as such they develop according to a pattern. The pattern may change slightly from child to child, but the following stages can usually be expected near the given ages. Locate the age of your child, read what skills are expected for his/her age level. Your child should be doing everything listed for the earlier ages.

3 – 4 ½ years

- Children are able to be understood by others most of the time
- The child is using three to four sentences.
- The child has just about mastered the p, b, m, h, and w sounds and all the vowels.
- The child has a vocabulary of 800 to 1300 words.
- The child's speech may have some stumbling, but this should not cause concern.
- The child has acquired the d, t, n, ng, k, and y sounds.

5 – 5 ½ years

- The child has mastered the f sound.
- Most children can carry on a conversation using a vocabulary with which they are familiar.
- The child can produce most two-letter blends, pr, br, kl, sn, sk, etc.
- The child speaks in four to five-word sentences, being able to be descriptive.
- The child is able to follow more complex and multi-step directions.

6 – 6 ½

- The child has mastered the v, th, zh, sh, and l sounds.
- The child is using five-word compound and complex sentences.
- The child often detects his speech mistake and corrects them.
- The child's vocabulary is 2,500 words or more.

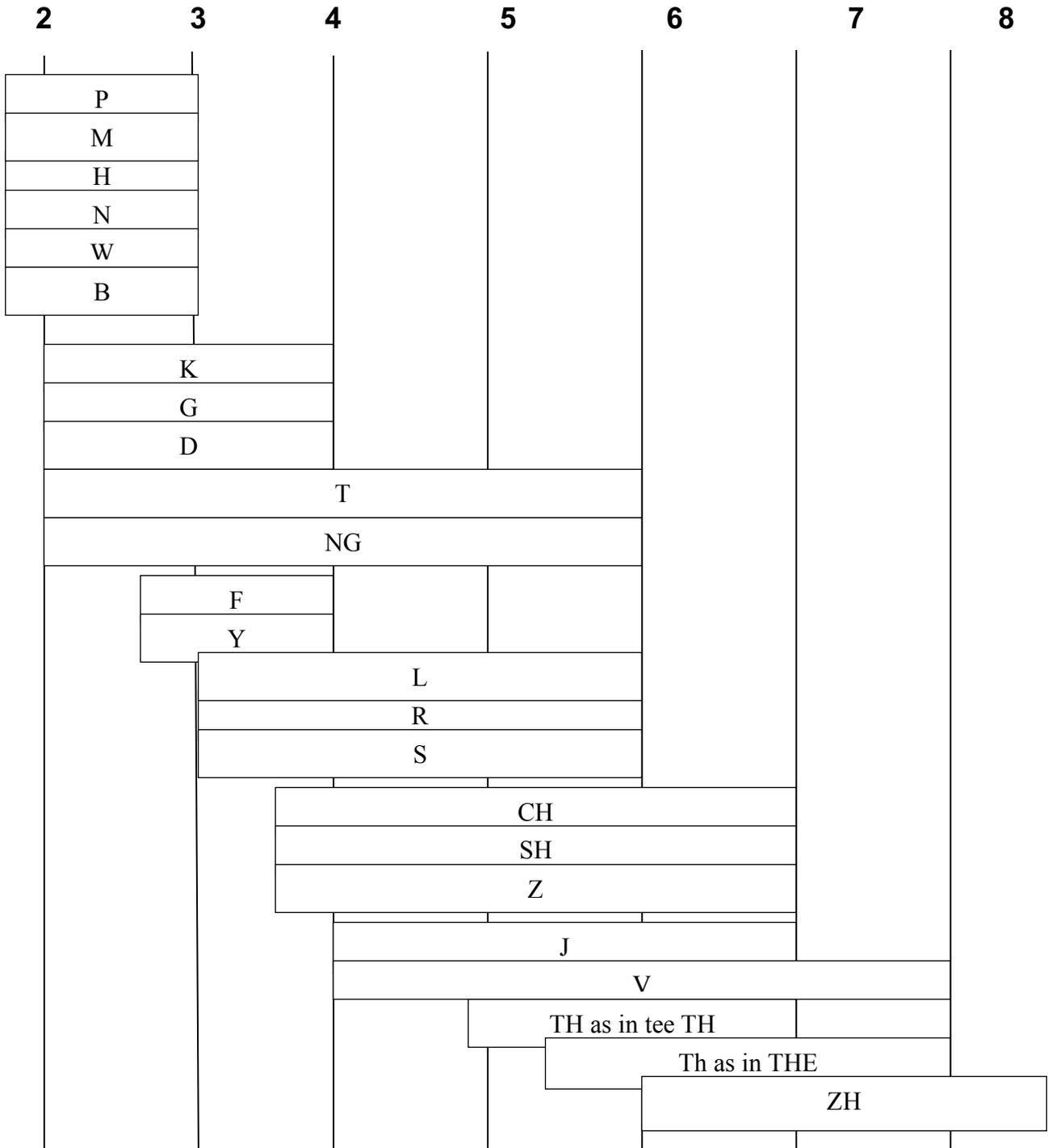
Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Chronological Age: _____

This bar graph shows that speech sounds usually develop over a period of time.



HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO DEVELOP NORMAL SPEECH

Perhaps these few “do’s and don’ts” will help you in guiding your child to good speech habits. Remember that if you suspect your child has a speech problem, the speech-language pathologist in your child’s school is your best source of help.

Do:

- For the very young child, encourage his production of simple necessary words such as: “mom” “daddy” “milk” etc...
- The three to four year old child should be able to talk in simple, complete sentences.
- Encourage good grammar.
- Spend some time everyday listening to your child.
- Read children’s books to him and have your child tell you about the story.
- Always allow your child enough time to express his thoughts.
- Always praise your child’s efforts to produce good speech and language.
- Provide lots of opportunities for verbal communication.

Do Not:

- Do not encourage “baby talk” from your child. If he says “wa-wa” for water, encourage him to attempt to say “water.” His response may not be perfect, but he will get the idea of what you expect.
- Do not talk “baby talk” to your child. Provide a good speech and language model.
- Do not be impatient when your child is talking. Give him time to express himself completely.
- Do not interrupt while he is talking.

Remember!

The majority of children with speech problems are those who have no major difficulties physically or emotionally. Experience has shown that these children can be taught to speak appropriately. Postponing diagnosis and treatment may mean possible frustration and academic difficulties upon entering school. Good speech is important for children to become strong readers.

Early detection is of prime importance. A simple phone call to your child’s school or the WCESC will put you in touch with your speech-language pathologist or audiologist; s/he will welcome the opportunity to discuss your concerns, provide information and suggest resources.

How can I help my child develop good communication skills?

If you suspect a communication problem, there are several things the family can do to help the child overcome it.

1. Be objective
2. Remember that it takes time to break a habit.
3. Set realistic goals.
4. Do not ask the child to make repeated attempts to correct a sound until he is at a stage when he is capable of doing so.
5. Set a good example in speech for your child.
6. Help the child to be pleasantly conscious of good speech and not to be overly concerned about it.
7. Learn to listen and discriminate. This is often as important as requiring the child to imitate the sound.
8. If you try to teach a specific sound, refer to the sound development chart for correct sound to begin with. Use the sound alone first, then at the beginning of words, in the middle of words and at the end of words.
9. Plan ten minutes a day for finding pictures and playing games for the purpose of discrimination and production practice.
10. Read aloud for ten minutes a day.
11. Read road signs, restaurant signs etc., when traveling.

12. Encourage favorable speaking situations.
13. Use special jobs around the house, such as doing dishes or taking a bath, for a speech period.
14. Refrain from constant correcting outside of the speech lessons.
15. Try to make good speech a happy situation.
16. Have others in the family join in the good speech fun.
17. Remember the child must feel a need to correct himself.

There are several things parents can do to help children develop skills they need to learn to speak correctly. Children need to develop strong muscles (oral-motor) in their mouth and face to be good oral communicators. Help your child learn to move their tongue and lips by licking popsicles, ice cream in a cone and licking frosting or peanut butter off a spoon. These activities are fun, encourage talking and build good oral-motor skills!

The following may indicate a need for help:

1. Your child is not talking at all by the age of two years.
2. Speech is not able to be understood most of the time by others after the age of three years.
3. Child is leaving off many beginning sounds in words after the age of three.
4. Child is not using two- to three-word sentences by the age of three.
5. Child uses sounds that are a year or more late in appearing in his speech, according to the chart.
6. Child speaks using mostly vowel sounds in speech.
7. Word endings are consistently missing after the age of five.
8. Child's spoken sentences are incomplete or are noticeably faulty at the age of five.
9. Child is embarrassed and disturbed by speech at any age.
10. Child is noticeably repeating sounds or phrases after the age of six.
11. Child is making speech errors after the age of seven.
12. Child's voice is monotone, too loud, too soft or of a poor quality that may indicate a hearing problem.
13. Child's voice is too high or too low for his age and sex.
14. Child sounds as though he were talking through his nose or as if he has a head cold.

Most common cause of speech problems are related to nonphysical problems such as the following:

1. The child has no reason to talk because his needs are anticipated by parents or others.
2. The child learns speech through imitation or less efficient speech models.
3. The child does not attend to speech production because of the fast pace of living, lessening of family togetherness, or through a general lack of verbal stimulation.
4. The child substitutes an earlier developing sound or sounds for articulators (lips, jaw, tongue, teeth, etc.) are not coordinated well enough to use.

A speech disability has a cause and after the incorrect form is used consistently 15 to 20 times, it becomes a habit.

RHYTHM OR STUTTERING

As your child learned to talk you may have noticed times when he seemed unable to "get his words out" or seemed to "stutter." He may still be doing this occasionally, especially when he is very tired or excited or when you or he is in a big hurry. Unless this is a predominant characteristic in his speech, he is probably passing through a period of normal non-fluency. There is no need for you to be overly concerned (about this characteristic of his speech), but there are a few things you can do to help him through these moments of non-fluency successfully.

1. Give your child full attention when he talks to you.
2. Do not interrupt him mid sentence or mid word.
3. Do not ask him to “slow down” or “take a deep breath” or say a troublesome word over.
4. Do not ask him to repeat anymore than is absolutely necessary.
5. Do not say a troublesome word for him unless it is a new word that he is simply trying to learn to pronounce.
6. Do not make jokes about his speech or act concerned or critical of his attempts to talk.

Situations where children tend to be non-fluent speakers:

7. When they are in conflict with persons to whom they are talking.
8. When speaking to listeners who do not respond well to them, such as parent reading the paper or preparing a meal.
9. When they are discouraged or humiliated; sometimes when they have just been punished, particularly if they feel they have been punished unfairly; when they have been frightened, overly excited or embarrassed.
10. When they are extremely fatigued, although ordinary degrees of tiredness seem to have little effect.
11. When they are ill.
12. When they do not have words they need to express what they are trying to say.
13. Threat of interruption.
14. Need to hurry.
15. Fear of what will happen if he/she does say it.
16. What he/she says brings unpleasant or painful memories.

If you are still concerned that your child may have a stuttering problem, follow the suggestions listed below but **do not in any way call your child’s attention to his speech**. Remember that he/she has no control over this problem and making an issue of it will only make it worse. **Listed below are some things you can do to help the child with a stuttering problem.**

1. Never “label” the child as a stutterer.
2. Try to keep the child happy and avoid an atmosphere of tension.
3. Help him gain confidence by giving him a chance for success in as many situations as possible.
4. Give the child adequate time to say what he has to say. Wait patiently for him to speak.
5. Requiring the child to talk when he is excited or fatigued is bad practice.
6. Call the child’s attention to something else immediately after a severe stuttering spasm.
7. See that he gets plenty of rest. He needs more than the average child
8. See that his physical condition is good.
9. Give him the right to decide things for himself.
10. Help him in every way possible to feel that he is a normal person. Explain to him that we all have difficulty with speech at times.
11. React unemotionally to his speech. Be understanding, but do not pity him.
12. Devices such as whistling, deep breathing, etc. are often suggested to stutterers. These things only help to complicate the situation. Do not suggest them.
13. Let the child stutter without reminding him of it.
14. Allow him to use his left hand if he prefers to do so.
15. Be sure that you do not penalize the child because of his speech defect.
16. Be consistent in discipline.
17. React to what the person is saying and not to how he is saying it.
18. Contact your school’s speech therapist who will observe your child and will confer with you regarding steps to be taken should your child need special care or speech therapy.

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO PREVENT A HEARING LOSS?

1. Leave the ear alone – never pick at wax or other foreign objects in the ear. Leave that delicate task to a physician.
2. Protect health by providing essential foods, plenty of rest and sleep.
3. Avoid excessive, constant noise.
4. Treat illness promptly. At the first sign of ear infection or any disease affecting the throat, sinus or respiration, seek immediate medical attention.
5. Blow nose correctly – with mouth open. Otherwise, you might be helping to transmit infection to the ear through the Eustachian tube.
6. Monitor the use of headphones and earphones.

If a hearing loss does develop, how can we help?

1. Make the child feel secure.
2. Be understanding and sympathetic without being overly protective.
3. Talk directly to the child. Let the child see your face when you talk. Do not distort your speech.
4. Afford him every opportunity to hear and understand what is being said.
5. Help him to gain self-confidence.
6. Be sure that he/she is included in conversation. Let him/her express their ideas and talk for themselves.
7. Be sure that you do not shout at the child.
8. Encourage them to invite their friends to their home.
9. Be sure that he/she is eating the right food. A well-balanced diet is important.
10. Be sure that he/she gets the maximum amount of rest and exercise.
11. Treat cold promptly.
12. Teach your child how to blow his/her nose with his/her mouth open.
13. Pay prompt attention to running noses and complaints of earache.
14. Never probe into the ear.
15. Be sure that home environment does not make the child nervous and keep him upset.
16. Monitor the hearing loss through hearing evaluations.
17. Make sure the school is aware of the problem that any necessary accommodations can be made (to lessen the chance of academic problems).

Wood County Speech, Language, and Hearing Services

Individual school districts in Wood County employ or are assigned one or more certified speech-language pathologist. Contact WCESC at 419-354-9010, for information regarding your specific concerns or resources available to you.

These individuals provide the following services:

- Identification of school age children with possible problems through group screening and/ or individual testing. In addition, diagnostic services are available to preschool county children.
- Remediation of problems through group or individual therapy,
- Providing classroom teachers with methods and materials to assist children with problems.
- Referring children with severe problems for further diagnostics, such as: medical, psychological, dental, etc.
- Confering with parents, teachers and other professionals about the individual problems of individual children.