



Phonological Processes

Phonological processes are patterns of sound errors that typically developing children use to simplify speech as they are learning to talk. These should only be red flags when phonological processes persist beyond the age when most typically developing children have stopped using them.

SUBSTITUTION	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	AGE OF ELIMINATION
BACKING	When alveolar sounds, like /t/ and /d/, are substituted with velar sounds like /k/ and /g/	"gog" for "dog"	Usually seen in more severe phonological delays.
FRONTING	When velar or palatal sounds, like /k/, /g/, and sh, are substituted with alveolar sounds like /t/, /d/, and /s/	"tootie" for "cookie"	3.5 YRS
GLIDING	When /r/ becomes a /w/, and /l/ becomes a /w/ or y	"wabbit" for "rabbit"	6 YRS
STOPPING	When a fricative (like /f/ or /s/) or affricate (ch,j) is substituted with a stop consonant like /p/ or /d/	"pan" for "fan"	/f/, /s/ by 3; /v/, /z/ by 3 1/2; sh, ch, j by 4 1/2; th gone by 5
VOWELIZATION	When the /l/ or er sounds are replaced with a vowel	"appo" for "apple"	—
AFFRICATION	When a non affricate is replaced with an affricate (ch or j)	"joor" for "door"	3 YRS
DEAFFRICATION	When an affricate, like ch or j, is replaced with a fricative or stop like sh or /d/	"ships" for "chips"	4 YRS
ALVEOLARIZATION	When a non-alveolar sound is substituted with an alveolar sound	"tu" for "shoe"	5 YRS
DEPALATALIZATION	When a palatal sound is substituted with a non-palatal sound	"fit" for "fish"	5 YRS
LABIALIZATION	When a non-labial sound is replaced with a labial sound	"pie" for "tie"	6 YRS
ASSIMILATION	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	AGE OF ELIMINATION
ASSIMILATION	When a consonant sound starts to sound like another sound in the word	"bub" for "bus"	3 YRS
DENASALIZATION	When a nasal consonant like /m/ or /n/ changes to a non-nasal consonant like /b/ or /d/	"doze" for "nose"	2.5 YRS
FINAL CONSONANT DEVOICING	When a voiced consonant at the end of a word like /b/ or /d/ is substituted with a voiceless consonant like /p/ or /t/	"pick" for "pig"	3 YRS
PREVOCALIC VOICING	When a voiceless consonant in the beginning of a word like /k/ or /f/ is substituted with a voiced consonant like /g/ or /v/	"gomb" for "comb"	6 YRS
COALESCENCE	When two phonemes are substituted with a different phoneme that still has similar features	"foon" for "spoon"	—
REDUPLICATION	When a complete or incomplete syllable is repeated	"babab" for "bottle"	3 YRS



Phonological Processes

Phonological processes are patterns of sound errors that typically developing children use to simplify speech as they are learning to talk. These should only be red flags when phonological processes persist beyond the age when most typically developing children have stopped using them.

SYLLABLES	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	AGE OF ELIMINATION
CLUSTER REDUCTION	When a consonant cluster is reduced to a single consonant	"pane" for "plane"	Gone by 4 yrs. without /s/, gone by 5 yrs. with /s/
FINAL CONSONANT DELETION	When the final consonant in a word is left off	"toe" for "toad"	3 YRS
INITIAL CONSONANT DELETION	When the initial consonant in a word is left off	"unny" for "bunny"	Usually seen in more severe phonological delays.
WEAK SYLLABLE DELETION	When the weak syllable in a word is deleted	"nana" for "banana"	4 YRS
EPENTHESIS	When a sound is added between two consonants, typically the uh sound	"buh-lue" for "blue"	8 YRS

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

While you can expect typically developing children to exhibit different phonological processes as they learn to communicate, there are key milestones to keep in mind to ensure these errors are not a sign of a more serious phonological delay or disorder.

If you are interested in getting your child assessed by a professional Speech Language Pathologist, get in contact with the friendly team at SpeechEase Speech Therapy today.

You can also visit our website for more information on how to support and encourage your child's language development at home.

Phone: 1300 773 273

Email: welcome@speechease.net.au

Website: www.speechease.net.au

Clinic Locations: Townsville, Mackay, Brisbane