

Why do Articulation Errors Occur?

While the cause of speech sound disorders is often unknown, there are several possible reasons why articulation errors may occur in children.

- **Typical Development** – Children learn to produce different sounds at different ages. Easier sounds are learned first, followed by more difficult sounds developing over time.
- **Phonology** – A child does not follow the standard rules regarding sound production and may develop their own (e.g. produce ‘t’ every time a word).
- **Sequencing muscle movements** – There may be difficulty with the brain’s ability to communicate with speech muscles to achieve coordinated muscle movement during sequencing of speech sounds. This disorder is referred to as developmental apraxia/dyspraxia.
- **Muscular** – Poor muscle strength range of movement and/or coordination can affect how speech sounds are produced. This is referred to as developmental dysarthria.
- **Structural** – A child may have a tongue-tie, cleft palate or an overbite making it difficult for them to produce sounds.
- **Hearing** – A history of ear infections (i.e. fluid in the middle ear) can affect how sounds are heard and a result, how are sounds are learned and produced.
- **Genetics** – A family history of speech and/or language disorders can increase the likelihood of other family members having similar difficulties.