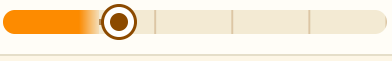
Phonological Processes Chart

Young children simplify words in predictable patterns while their speech develops. Each pattern below **usually fades by a typical age**. If one is **still there at the check age**, especially if strangers find your child hard to understand, it's worth asking a speech-language pathologist. Ages are years;months (3;6 = 3½).

Pattern	What it sounds like	Usually gone by	Check if still there at	Age 2 to 7 (2 3 4 5 6 7)
Stopping of /f/ /v/	"pish" for fish	**3;0**	**3;6**	
Final consonant deletion	"ca" for cat	**3;0–3;3**	**3;6**	
Assimilation	"gog" for dog	**3;0**	**4;0**	
Fronting	"tat" for cat	**3;0–3;6**	**4;0**	
Weak syllable deletion	"nana" for banana	**3;0–4;0**	**4;0**	
Deaffrication	"ship" for chip	**4;0**	**4;6**	
Stopping of /s/ /z/	"tun" for sun	**3;6**	**5;0**	
Cluster reduction	"top" for stop	**4;0** about 5;0 with /s/	**5;0**	
Stopping of /sh/ /ch/ /j/	"too" for shoe	**4;6**	**5;6**	
Gliding of /l/ and /r/	"wabbit" for rabbit	**5;0–6;6** /l/ by 5;0, /r/ by 6;6	**6;6**	

Still typical · Usually fading out · Past the usual age · Check with an SLP if still there

How to spot a pattern

1. Record 3–5 minutes of your child talking naturally.
2. Write down each word you meant and what your child said ("cat" → "tat").
3. The same change in three or more words is usually a pattern.
4. Compare it with the chart above.

Still on schedule

- Before the "usually gone by" age, and strangers mostly understand your child: keep watching.
- **Voicing** ("big" for pig) and **final devoicing** ("cap" for cab) are typical too, usually gone by about 3;0.
- Most of these patterns fade on their own as speech matures.

Time to act

- Past the "usually gone by" age: model the right words during play and reading.
- Still there at the check age, or hard for strangers to understand: ask for a speech evaluation. U.S. school evaluations are free under IDEA.
- **Backing** ("key" for tea) at any age, if you hear it consistently: it isn't a typical pattern.

Informational, not diagnostic. This chart supports a conversation with a qualified speech-language pathologist; it does not diagnose. Children vary, and ages apply to children learning mainstream American English. Ages as summarized in our guide, from Bowen (2011), Table 3, and ASHA's phonological patterns. Full guide with examples: **soundsafari.app/blog/phonological-processes-guide** · Free minimal pairs by pattern: **soundsafari.app/sounds/minimal-pairs** · © 2026 Sound Safari

Sound Safari on the App Store