



SPANISH PHONEMIC INVENTORY

Please remember that dialectal differences exist for each language and should be considered when using the phonemic charts.

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
Nasal		m		n		ɲ		
Trill				r				
Tap or Flap				ɾ				
Fricative		f		s			x	
Affricate					tʃ			
Glides (Approximant)	w					j		
Liquid (Lateral Approximant)				l				

Reference:

Goldstein, B. (2000). *Cultural and linguistic diversity resource guide for speech-language pathologists*. San Diego, CA: Singular.

Facts on Spanish Phonology

- The following consonant clusters are used in Spanish; these do not occur in word-final position:¹
/pl/, /pʎ/, /bl/, /bʎ/, /tʎ/, /dʎ/, /kl/, /kʎ/, /gl/, /gʎ/, /fl/, and /fʎ/.
- There are five consonants used in word-final position:²: /l/, /ʎ/, /d/, /n/, and /s/.
- In intervocalic environments, the allophonic variations for /b, d, g/ are /β, ð, ɣ/.³
- Dialectal variations in Spanish phonology exist. It is important to recognize this when assessing a Spanish speaker. For example, /v/ and /θ/ occur in some Spanish dialects.
- By age 4, normally developing monolingual Spanish speakers acquire most sounds of the language except for /g/, /f/, /s/, /ɲ/, /r/, and /ʎ/.⁴
- Phonemes in English that do not occur in Spanish include the following:
 - /ŋ/, /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, and /ɹ/.
- The Spanish vowel system is much smaller than that of English; they are similar to the short vowels of English. Spanish vowels include the following: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/.⁵

- Spanish developmental norms⁶

3;3	3;7	3;11	4;3	4;7	4;11	5;7	>5;7
/p,b,t/	/k,w,m,n/	/j,l/	/f/	/tʃ,d,g,f/	/x,ɲ/	/s/	/r/

Data were normed on 120 Spanish-speaking children of Mexican descent living in California. Spanish was reported as the primary language. Data reflect 90% accuracy of phoneme production..

¹ Bedore, L. (1999). The acquisition of Spanish. In O. Taylor & L. Leonard (Ed.), *Language acquisition across North America: Cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives* (pp. 157–207). San Diego, CA: Singular.

² *Ibid.*

³ Jimenez, B. C. (1987). Acquisition of Spanish consonants in children aged 3-5 years, 7 months. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 18*, 357–363.

⁴ Acevedo, M. (1993). Development of Spanish consonants in pre-school children. *Journal of Communication Disorders, 15*, 9–15.

⁵ Iglesias, A., & Anderson, N. (1993). Dialectal variations. In J. Bernthal & N. Bankson (Eds.). *Articulation and phonological disorders*. (3rd ed., pp. 147-161). New York: Prentice-Hall.

⁶ Jimenez, B. C. (1987). Acquisition of Spanish consonants in children aged 3-5 years, 7 months. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 18*, 357–363.