



SPANISH PHONEMIC INVENTORY¹

	Bilabial		Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar		Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar		Uvular	Pharyngeal	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								

¹ Chart based on information gathered from the following:

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:² /pl/, /pf/, /bl/, /bf/, /tʃ/, /dʃ/, /kl/, /kf/, /gl/, /gf/, /fl/, and /ff/.
- There are five consonants used in word-final position:³ /l/, /ʎ/, /d/, /n/, and /s/.
- In intervocalic environments, the allophonic variations for /b, d, g/ are /β, ð, ɣ/.⁴
- Dialectal variations in Spanish phonology exist. It is important to recognize this when assessing a Spanish speaker.
- By age 4, normally developing monolingual Spanish speakers acquire most sounds of the language except for /g/, /f/, /s/, /ɲ/, /r/, and /ʎ/.⁵
- Phonemes in English that do not occur in Spanish include the following:
 - /ŋ/, /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/, /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 are the following: /i/, /e/, /a/, /u/, and /o/.⁶
- Spanish developmental norms⁷

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,ʎ/	/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..

² 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.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ 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.

⁵ Acevedo, M. (1993). Development of Spanish consonants in pre-school children. *Journal of Communication Disorders, 15*, 9–15.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.