Prevocalic Voicing Minimal Pairs

A voiceless consonant at the start of a word turns on its voice.



RESOLVES	PAIRS	SOUNDS
By 3;0	14	p, t, k, f, s, sh, ch, th

Every consonant pair in English has a quiet twin and a buzzy twin - /p/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/, /k/ and /g/. The mouth does exactly the same thing for both; the only difference is whether the voice box is running. At the beginning of a word, right before a vowel, the voice often starts a fraction too early and the quiet twin comes out buzzy.

Try this: Make voicing physical. Put the child's hand on your throat, then on theirs. Say /b/ - buzzy, it tickles. Say /p/ - quiet, nothing. Then hold a strip of tissue in front of the mouth: /p/ makes it move, /b/ does not. Two different senses, same lesson.

/p/ (7 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **pig**	>	 big	 **pull**	>	 bull
 **pear**	>	 bear	 **path**	>	 bath
 **pea**	>	 bee	 **peach**	>	 beach
 **pin**	>	 bin			

/t/ (1 pair)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **toe**	>	 dough

/k/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **coat**	>	 goat	 **cold**	>	 gold

/f/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **fan**	>	 van	 **face**	>	 vase

/s/ (2 pairs)

TARGET		CHILD SAYS	TARGET		CHILD SAYS
 **sue**	>	 zoo	 **sip**	>	 zip

* not a real word - written the way a child would say it