**Help your child to say words clearly**

When a child has difficulty saying a sound, it can be tempting to try and encourage them to correct the sound or the word. Instead try and interpret what your child has said and listen to the overall message.



If your child does find a word hard to say, just say the word back to them clearly. Your child will learn by hearing you say the word correctly.

Evidence suggests that speech sound development can be supported by developing a child’s listening and sound awareness skills. It is important that children have these skills in place in order to be able to tune into speech and distinguish between sounds. The following activities can be used at home or in preschool/nursery to develop your child’s listening and sound awareness. Some of these are taken from the Letters and Sounds Phase One Teaching Programme; please see the document online for further activities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letters-and-sounds-principles-and-practice-of-high-quality-phonics-phase-one-teaching-programme>

* **Listening walk:** talk together about how to be a good listener e.g. staying quiet, having your ears ready. Go on a walk indoors or outdoors and listen very carefully to the sounds you hear around you. Talk about each of these sounds.
* **Go games:**  use any activity e.g. throwing a ball, pushing a car, jumping etc, encouraging your child to wait for the word ‘go’ before starting the activity. Gradually increase the time he/she has to wait.
* **Hide a noisy toy:** e.g. a ticking clock, music box and help your child find it by following the noise, rather than looking for it. “Listen, where’s the noise coming from?”
* Teach your child **songs or rhymes:** once your child has listened to them a few times, try pausing at key moments to let your child join in. Read rhyming books together and encourage your child to join in with repetitive rhyming phrases e.g. ‘Run, run as fast as you can, you can’t catch me I’m the gingerbread man’
* **Musical statues:**  play some music and move around while it is playing. As soon as the music stops, stand still.
* Use **home sound makers:**  e.g. biscuit tin, yoghurt pot shakers, spoon in a cup, bunch of keys etc. Spend some time making sound with these. Show your child first and then encourage him/her to copy the sound. Once you’ve done this, hide the sound maker behind a sofa or a big box. Make one sound and see if your child can tell you which one it is. (You can try this first by having pairs of sounds the same e.g. two bunches of keys, two squeaky toys. Give one to your child, make the sound out of his/her sight, and see if they can then find the other one that makes the same sound. Start with only two sounds to choose from then gradually build up to choosing from five or six.
* Play a game where your child performs a different action when he hears a different sound e.g. he marches when he hears a drum and runs when he hears a bell etc.
* **Animal sound lotto:** have 3 or 4 toy animals or animal pictures in front of your child (e.g. dog, cat, cow, pig). Make one of the animal noises and see if your child can tell you which animal makes that noise.
* Use a shaker or a drum (or clap hands) and get your child to listen as you make a number of beats. Then help him/her to do the same. Start with one or two beats and build up slowly. Change the volume, producing some beats loudly and some quietly.
* Have fun **playing with sounds** during everyday play activitiese.g. make animal noises, transport noises and other symbolic sounds (e.g. ‘mmm’ when teddy is eating, ‘brmm’ when playing with a car etc).
* Look at **picture books or puzzles** that give plenty of opportunity for you to say words for your child to hear. Speak in a clear voice and get down to your child’s level so that they can see your face as you model the words.

The following website also has a range of online games and activities

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-1-resources.html>

You can access the HCT **Children’s** **Speech and Language Therapy Service** web pages at:

<https://www.hct.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens-speech-and-language-therapy/>



**HELPING CHILDREN TO SAY WORDS CLEARLY**



**SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY ADVICE LEAFLET**