**HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?**



**HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD'S ARTICULATION**

*BE UNDERSTANDING!* Learning to speak is a complex task. Your child is not just lazy. Certain patterns develop in normal articulation development as a result of a concept called "simplification." When children continue to simplify their speech beyond what is expected at their developmental level, they are not doing so purposefully. Usually, this is the result of motor issues, hearing issues, or processing issues that are not under the child's voluntary control.

*BE A PRACTICE PARTNER!* Ask you child's speech therapist to let you know when and what would be helpful for you to practice at home. Then practice your child's successful words, using word cards or objects at home. Use games and other fun activities and make your practice sessions short and frequent (5-15 minutes per day).

*DON'T DIRECTLY CORRECT SOUNDS THAT YOUR CHILD HAS NOT WORKED ON YET.* Direct correction has been shown to be largely ineffective and disruptive. This is especially true when the child has not had to the opportunity to have the new skill presented in a more isolated way than connected speech (i.e., conversation). As some point, your child's speech therapist will let you know if your child is at the stage where gentle reminders may be effective during connected speech for the targeted sound. This is usually after mastery has been achieved in speech therapy in single words, phrases and/or sentences.

*USE REVISION EVERY DAY TO ADDRESS THE ARTICULATION NEEDS AS A WHOLE.* Parents don't realize how powerful this can be, particularly if the revision is used consistently and simply. Revision is the technique where you repeat what the child has said, but use the correct pronunciation. You may want to give your child's sound a little extra emphasis. For example, your child says, "Look at the bug" and you repeat slowly, "Look at that bug! Go, bug, go," emphasizing the ending "g" on bug.

*DON'T DIRECTLY IMITATE YOUR CHILD'S ERRORS. MODEL GOOD SPEECH.* Some of the cute things children say are very precious to us. But don't inadvertently reinforce the incorrect productions by laughing or drawing attention to them. Repeat the utterance using the correct pronunciation. And make a tape or video recording to save your memories of some of the adorable things your child says at this age. Model good speech.

*ADDRESS HEALTH ISSUES THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROBLEM.*Fight ear infections. Address other physical difficulties that may contribute such as mouth breathing or voice difficulties with your speech therapist and/or doctor.

*READ TO YOUR CHILD.* It is amazing how much this accomplishes. Use reading as a way to surround your child with their target sound (i.e., "If you Give a Pig a Pancake" for the sounds /k/ and /g/). When using books with a targeted sound, emphasize your child's sounds in words found in the book.

*PLAY WITH YOUR CHILD.* Spend time talking with your child in play while you model the correct productions using revision. Some recommended games include: Memory, Go Fish, Candyland, and Hi-Ho Cherrio.

*TALK TO YOUR CHILD.* Talk to your child as you go through your daily routine. This is a chance to model many correct productions, use revision, and stimulate language development.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

* Talk to yourself about what you're doing, thinking, and feeling while engaged in an activity. Let your child listen and comment.
* Describe your child's actions while he or she is engaged in an activity. Talk about what you think he or she is thinking, feeling and experiencing.
* Name and describe objects you are using for an activity. Use words that relate to color, size, shape and function.
* Provide good speech examples. Speak in simple sentences. Model correct speech.
* Talk naturally, casually. Don't over-exaggerate.
* Listen to what your child has to say. Respond to questions, comments, ideas, plans, etc.
* Make talking fun. Use rhymes, jingles, finger plays, make-believe games and musical activities.
* Expand upon your child's language attempts. Build on what your child says. Add to it.
* Read to your child often. Read cereal boxes, road signs, store advertisements, game directions, TV schedules, etc.
* Ask questions. Find out how much your child knows and understands about what you're experiencing together.

**MORE SPECIFICALLY...**

* Provide more information, not less. Keep information relevant, meaningful, contextual, and purposeful, NOT broken into meaningless parts.
* Overlap information in as many ways as possible to increase repetition and help your child make needed associations.
* Language addressed toward the child should be appropriate to his/her developmental level. Some comprehension problems are not obvious and can be perceived as a lack of effort or attention initially.
* Use pointing, gestures and labeling to help develop relationships among concepts and words. Non verbal language is important, too!
* Try to use a slower speaking rate whenever possible. Use pauses in speech to highlight important points.
* Encourage your child to question what they don't understand.
* Consistently check for understanding. Ask your child to repeat directions and important information back to you. Question your child specifically to see is s/he understands what is expected of him/her.
* Try to reduce background noise as much as possible, especially during homework time.
* Be sure you and your child are making eye contact when you speak.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD'S FLUENCY**

* Use a slow, relaxed rate when speaking with your child and others. Avoid telling your child to slow down.
* Pause more often and for a longer period of time between phrases, comments and questions.
* Make sure everyone takes turns when speaking and each person is allowed to finish what they want to say. Do not allow the child to interrupt others or others to interrupt the child.
* Keep eye contact with your child to let them know they have your attention and you are interested in what they have to say, whether being fluent or dysfluent.
* Set aside time each day when you can sit and talk individually with your child in an unhurried, relaxed manner. Increase opportunities for your child to talk when he or she is going through a fluent period.
* Follow your child's lead when talking or playing with him or her. Talk about your child's chosen topics or comment on their activities.
* Speak in simple sentences, using vocabulary that is appropriate to your child's language level.
* Ask fewer questions and make more comments.
* Avoid having your child recite in front of people or tell about things on demand, especially when overly excited or upset.
* Acknowledge your child's comments about having difficulty talking or getting the words out, and assure him/her that you will listen.
* Give the child lots of opportunities to participate in activities that are fun for him or her and that he or she is good at to keep self-esteem up.
* Have routines throughout the day that the child can follow, and know what is expected.

**GOOD HABITS FOR A HEALTHY VOICE**

1. Avoid talking in a funny voice (i.e., Donald Duck, Darth Vader, etc.)

2. Drinks lots of liquids throughout the day.

3. Avoid caffeine. Cold medicines can also irritate the vocal cords.

4. Avoid constant throat clearing and coughing.

5. Rest your voice (cut down on talking).

6. Try to eliminate background noise when talking.

7. Avoid yelling and screaming.

8. Avoid whispering.

9. Get plenty of sleep.

**101 WAYS TO PRAISE A CHILD**

The most important thing you can do to support your child's speech and language development is praise them for all of their hard work. Here are a few suggestions...but remember, a smile is worth 1,000 words!

Wow! \* Way to go! \* You're special! \* Outstanding! \* Excellent! \* Great! \* Good \* Neat \* Well done \* Remarkable \* I knew you could do it! \* I'm proud of you! \* Super Star \* Nice work \* Looking good \* You're on top of it \* You're catching on \* Now you've got it \* How smart! \* Good job! \* That's incredible! \* Hot dog! \* Remarkable job \* You're beautiful \* You're a winner \* You make me happy \* Hip, hip, horray! \* You're important \* Magnificent \* Beautiful \* Fantastic \* You're on target \* You're on your way \* How nice \* You're spectacular \* You're darling \* Super \* Super job \* Beautiful work \* Good for you \* Nothing can stop you now \* Dynamite! \* You're fantastic! \* Awesome! \* You're precious \* Fantastic job \* You've discovered the secret \* Bingo! \* Great discovery \* You're responsible \* You're exciting \* You're fun \* You're a real trooper \* Marvelous! \* Terrific! \* You're growing up \* Outstanding performance \* You tried hard \* You figured it out \* What a good listener \* A big hug \* What an imagination \* You learned it right \* You're incredible \* Now you're flying \* Bravo! \* Beautiful! \* I like you \* I respect you \* You're sensational \* Phenomenal \* A+ job \* Horray for you! \* You're unique \* You care \* Creative job \* You belong \* You brighten my day \* Super work \* That's the best \* You made my day! \* Say: I love you! \* Beautiful sharing \* You mean the world to me \* You're important \* You've got a friend \* You're a joy \* You make me laugh \* You're A-OK \* I trust you \* You're perfect \* You're wonderful \* Give a big kiss \* Exceptional performance! \*