

How Parents Can Help Facilitate Articulation Skills

by Harriett Hoeprich, Speech/Language Specialist

Be a practice partner.

Ask your child's speech/language therapist to let you know when it 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 sessions short and frequent. (5-15 minutes a 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 the opportunity to have the new skill presented in a more isolated way than connected speech. At some point, your 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 at the single word level, however.

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 the sound a little extra emphasis. (Example--Child: Look at bu! Adult: Look at that bug! Go, bug, go!)

Don't directly imitate your child's errors. Model good speech.

Some of the cute things our children say are very precious to us. But don't inadvertently reinforce the incorrect productions by laughing or drawing attention. Certainly don't imitate the incorrect production. 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.

Read to your child.

It's amazing how much this accomplishes. Use reading as a way to surround your child with the targeted sound. (See "Ideas for Books to Enhance Articulation Skills".)

Play with your child.

Spend time talking with your child in play, while you model the correct productions very simply, using revision.

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, too.

Below are some fun ideas of games and activities you can use to practice your child's sounds. Many of these games involve the use of simple picture cards which can be made out of index cards and catalogs.

Use the picture cards to play Concentration (Memory) or Go Fish.

Play a board game like Candyland, but have your child say a word before he takes a turn each time. Don't forget to take a word yourself! Then it's one more model your child gets to hear. When your child is ready for this step, let your child "catch" you making the sound "the old way" and let him show you how it should be said with the "new sound".

If your child isn't quite ready to enjoy traditional board games like Candyland, use something like Hi-Ho Cherrio, which is a simpler type of game. Use the picture cards in the same manner, however.

Play more active types of games, such as Nerf Golf, Bean Bag Toss, Ring Toss, and Bowling by simplifying the game to include less movement. This works really well with the minimal pairs. Put out two bowling pins with a picture card of the pair against each one (pin-bin, for example). Then try several approaches: Have your child tell you which one he knocked over, or which one he will knock over. Then gently tell him: "You said you were going to knock over the picture of 'pin'. You knocked over 'bin'."

Hide the picture cards and let your child "find" them. You can also hide the pictures in other containers, such as plastic eggs.

Ideas For Books To Enhance Articulation Skills

by Harriett Hoeprich, Speech/Language Specialist 1995

The following are only a brief beginning list of possible books to enhance articulation skills. One reason that reading can be a helpful way of enhancing articulation is by "bombarding" the child with many opportunities to hear the correct pronunciation of the targeted sound. When you know your child has worked on a certain sound in therapy, it can also be another way to practice new skills. When you talk about the book with your child, the sound should come up naturally because of the topic or words in the book. You can use a "closure" technique to elicit certain words, if you feel fairly confident that your child can produce the sound. (For example: "Caps for sale! Fifty cents a ____." letting your child fill in the blank.) Or you could have the child "read" part of the book with you, if it's a story he is very familiar with. Very repetitive stories are also helpful in eliciting phrases--such as "Polar Bear, Polar Bear, what do you hear?"

Remember to use a very natural, low-key approach. Drilling under pressure will probably result in the child disliking the activity and possibly the whole idea of reading and speaking, which is certainly not your goal! Remember that even if your child is "only" listening, she is still gaining the auditory bombardment of the sound and opportunities to hear the correct pronunciation in a controlled setting, not to mention all the other benefits of spending time with you and reading.

K SOUND

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR by Eric Carle

CROSS COUNTRY CAT by Mary Calhoun

CAPS FOR SALE by Esphyr Slobodkina

CATS AND CANARY by Michael Foreman

CAN I KEEP HIM by Steven Kellogg

CORDUROY by Don Freeman

MILLIONS OF CATS by Wanda Gag

D SOUND

A DARK, DARK TALE by Ruth Brown

HAVE YOU SEEN MY DUCKLING? by Nancy Tafuri

MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS by Robert McCloskey

P SOUND

EACH PEACH, PEAR, PLUM by Janet and Allen Ahlberg

HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON by Crockett Johnson

PAT THE BUNNY by Dorothy Kunhardt

THE PIG'S WEDDING by Helen Heine

POPPY THE PANDA by Dick Gackenbach

F SOUND

FAMILY by Helen Oxenbury

FEELINGS by Alik
FINDERS KEEPERS by Will and Nicholas Mordvinoff
A FARMER'S ALPHABET by Mary Axariun
THE FOOT BOOK by Dr. Seuss
THE FOOLISH FROG by Pete and Charles Seeger
FIVE LITTLE FOXES AND THE SNOW by Tony Johnston
ONE FISH, TWO FISH, RED FISH, BLUE FISH by Dr. Seuss
FIX-IT by David McPhail
GONE FISHING by Earlene Long
THE LITTLE FUR FAMILY by Margaret Wise Brown

M SOUND

MOON MAN by Tomi Ungerer
MAMA DON'T ALLOW by Thatchur Hurd
MADELINE by Ludwig Bemelmans
MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB by Mary Josepha Hale
MAX'S FIRST WORD by Rosemary Wells
MITCHELL IS MOVING by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat

G SOUND

GOOD MORNING, CHICK by Mirra Ginsburg
GOOD-BYE HOUSE by Frank Asch
GONE FISHING by Earlene Long
GOODNIGHT MOON by Margaret Wise Brown
I GO WITH MY FAMILY TO GRANDMA'S by Riki Levinson

H SOUND

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR by Eric Carle
THE THREE LITTLE PIGS by many different authors
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MOON by Frank Asch
HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON by Crockett Johnson
HIPPOS GO BERSERK by Sandra Boynton
HOLES AND PEEKS by Ann Jonas
HOW DO I PUT IT ON? by Shrego Watanabe
HUSH LITTLE BABY by Jeanette Winter

B SOUND

I AM A BUNNY by Ole Risom
HUSH LITTLE BABY by Jeanette Winter
PAT THE BUNNY by Dorothy Kunhardt
THE RUNAWAY BUNNY by Margaret Wise Brown

L SOUND

I KNOW AN OLD LADY by Nadine Bernard Wescott
I LOVE MY BABY SISTER by Elaine Edelman
A LION FOR LEWIS by Rosemary Wells
THE LITTLE DUCK by Judy Dunn
THE LITTLE PUPPY, THE LITTLE LAMB, THE LITTLE KITTEN, ETC... by Judy Dunn
THE LADY AND THE SPIDER by Faith McNulty
THE LITTLE FUR FAMILY by Margaret Wise Brown
LYLE, LYLE, CROCODILE by Bernard Waber

SH SOUND

HUSH LITTLE BABY by Jeanette Winter
ONE FISH, TWO FISH, RED FISH, BLUE FISH by Dr. Seuss
SHEEP IN A JEEP by Nancy Shaw
SHEEP IN A SHOP by Nancy Shaw
SHHHH! by Suzy Kline
SHHHHH...BANG by Margaret Wise Brown
SHINE, SUN! by Carol Greene

TH SOUND

THE THANK YOU BOOK, by Francoise Seignobuse
THINGS I HATE by Harriett Wittels
THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD by Wally Piper
AND TO THINK THAT I SAW IT ON MULBERRY STREET by Dr. Seuss
TEETH by Michael Ricketts
THANK YOU by Edith Flack Ackley
THUNDERSTORM by Mary Szilagyi
THUMP AND PLUNK by Janice May Udry
THE THINKING BOOK by Sandol Stoddard
THE THINKING PLACE by Barbara Joosse
THIS AND THAT AND THUS AND SO by Evaline Nuss
THIDWICK, THE BIG-HEARTED MOOSE by Dr. Seuss
THREE BY THE SEA by Edward Marshall

R SOUND

ROSIE'S WALK by Pat Hutchins
ROTTEN RALPH by Jack Gantos
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD by the Brothers Grimm

S SOUND

SWIMMY by Leo Lionni
BROWN BEAR, BROWN BEAR by Bill Martin
SEE AND SAY by Antonio Frasconi
THE SEAL MOTHER by Mordicai Berenstein
SEARCH FOR SAM by Neil Morris
SEEN ANY CATS? by Frank Modell
SEEDS by Terry Jennings

T SOUND

THE TEENY-TINY WOMAN by Paul Galdone
TEN, NINE, EIGHT by Molly Bang
TOUCH! TOUCH! by Riki Levinson
TEENY TINY by Jill Bennett
TASTING by Richard Allington
TAN TAN'S HAT by Kazuo Iwamura
TICKLE TICKLE by Helen Oxenbury
TIGER CAT by Slawomir Wolski
TIC, TAC AND TOE by Bruno Munari

FINAL CONSONANTS

LOUIS THE FISH by Arthur Yorinks
THE LITTLE DUCK by Judy Dunn
MOON MAN by Tomi Ungerer
PERFECT THE PIG by Susan Jeschke
THE CAT IN THE HAT by Dr. Seuss
ONE FISH, TWO FISH, RED FISH, BLUE FISH by Dr. Seuss
CROSS COUNTRY CAT by Mary Calhoun
CAN I KEEP HIM? by Steven Kellogg
A DARK, DARK TALE by Ruth Brown
THE FOOT BOOK by Dr. Seuss
GOODNIGHT MOON by Margaret Wise Brown
HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOON by Frank Asch
OLD MACDONALD HAD A FARM Several versions available
HOP ON POP by Dr. Seuss
TEETH by Michael Ricketts
TIC, TAC, AND TOE by Bruno Munari
You will probably come up with many more of your own favorites!

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