

Some Ideas to Help with Listening

- ▲ Make sure that you have your child's attention. Remove distractions; eg, radio, TV, dishwasher, electronic games, particularly when your child needs to concentrate on what you are saying.
- ▲ Establish eye contact and stand or sit close to your child when you speak.
- ▲ Slow down your rate of speech. Pause to give your child time to think before responding.
- ▲ Repeat or rephrase your message when your child does not understand.
- ▲ Speak clearly. Use gestures, pauses and inflection to emphasise the message.
- ▲ Have your child repeat or rephrase what you have said to check that they have understood.
- ▲ Model good listening behaviours. Take the time to listen. If possible stop what you are doing. Give your full attention as you listen. Set aside specific times for sharing conversation and interacting with your child.
- ▲ Simplify the language of your message. Use clear and concise vocabulary and sentences.

Ideas to Help with Speech Sounds...

- ▲ Remember that learning to use speech sounds takes time and there is a natural sequence of development. A child who is making speech sound errors is not being naughty or lazy.
- ▲ You can correct the child's sounds quite naturally within a conversation. When you hear an error, repeat the word correctly within the conversation, so that the child can compare his/her pronunciation with yours.

eg. Child: "I see a bish!"

Adult: "Wow – what a big fish!"

You can emphasise the error sound if you like; eg, 'fish' but the child is not required to repeat the word or produce the sound correctly. You are simply giving him/her a good speech model.

- ▲ Remember, responding to what the child is saying is more important than responding to how it is said.
- ▲ Have fun playing with sounds.

Fun Activities to Improve Sound Production

All sounds that we use in English can be practised in play. The more these sounds are practised, the clearer they will become in speech. Exaggerate the sounds and your facial expression to give a clear model for your child to imitate. When these sounds are produced in play situations your child is more likely to imitate them.

B

- ▲ a boat that goes bbb as it chugs along
- ▲ a ball that bounces bbb
- ▲ try peek-a-boo or something that says 'boo'

P

- ▲ making a paper person bend over by whispering a 'p' sound
- ▲ blowing out candles
- ▲ blowing bubbles

M

- ▲ a car or trolley that goes mmmm
- ▲ things that taste yummy – mmm

T

- ▲ tapping a hammer on anything
- ▲ a dripping tap goes ttt
- ▲ a ticking clock

D

- ▲ pretend to be banging a drum ddd

F

- ▲ imitate a rabbit's teeth fff
- ▲ a sky rocket as it fizzes up fff

V

- ▲ a noisy plane, truck or car goes
v v v v v v

CH

- ▲ the train goes ch ch ch toot toot

SH

- ▲ tell people to be quiet
- ▲ look the baby's sleeping – sh

S

- ▲ a snake sound
- ▲ the sound of air coming out of a tyre
- ▲ filling up a car with petrol

Z

- ▲ bees or other flying insects can go zzz

G

- ▲ a noisy drinker goes ggg
- ▲ give dolls a drink or pretend to drink from a cup going ggg

K

- ▲ the click of a camera as a photo is taken
Other sound sequences can be used to practise vowel sounds and assist younger children to gain control over their lips and tongue.
- ▲ animal noises
- ▲ phone ringing – brring brring
- ▲ exaggerated laughing – ho ho hee he ha ha
- ▲ exaggerated crying – boo hoo
- ▲ something's wrong or broken – uh oh, oh no
- ▲ big smiles – eee
- ▲ fish face, hooting like an owl ooo
- ▲ blowing kisses

Ideas to Help with Language Development

▲ Use meaningful language and activities

Always follow your child's lead and comment about the activities or topic he/she is focusing on at the time. Language is learned best when it is interesting and relevant.

▲ Be aware of background noise and distractions

Children's ability to 'tune in', to something is reduced when there are other things competing for their attention.

▲ Gain their attention before speaking

This can be by speaking their name or when culturally appropriate a touch or establishing eye contact.

▲ Keep it short and simple

Use language at the appropriate level of complexity; eg, if your child is only speaking in single words, your utterances should be at the same level or slightly longer, two words. Eg, 'car' or 'red car'.

▲ Use specific vocabulary

Keep your utterances clear and succinct. A child is more likely to respond appropriately if you tell them, "put your cup on the bench", rather than "put it over there".

▲ Create the need to talk

Ensure that talking is necessary for your child. While we are often able to anticipate or identify the child's need, wait until an attempt to verbalise the problem is made, before responding.

▲ Allow time to respond

Pause for longer than usual. Give your child an opportunity to reply to you.

▲ Give positive reinforcement

Always reward communication attempts by responding to your child's intended meaning even if the form of communication is not correct.

▲ Repeat, repeat, repeat

Children need to hear the same language many times before they will remember it or use it themselves.

▲ Reduce the number of questions

Try to keep the number of questions you ask your child to a minimum, especially those requiring just one word answers such as "What's this?". Instead, focus on feeding in language by making comments about what you and/or your child are doing.

Ideas to Help Your Child's Voice

IF YOUR CHILD HAS A HOARSE VOICE

Sometimes our voices can become hoarse even if we're not sick. Often this is a result of doing things which hurt our vocal cords. Vocal cords are two bands of muscles in the throat which bang together to produce the voice. There are some things we do which can put strain on the vocal cords. These include yelling, screaming, singing too much or at a pitch which is difficult to reach, making 'growly' noises, excessive coughing or throat clearing. Here are some ways children can be helped to take care of their voices.

- ▲ Encourage your child to take regular drinks of water. This helps to 'oil' the vocal cords and assists them to work together smoothly.
- ▲ Discourage your child from making a lot of animal or 'growly' noises, such as roaring like a lion, making machine noises, high pitched squeaking etc. This type of voice use can strain the vocal cords.
- ▲ Discourage your child from yelling or screaming during play. Suggest alternative activities which do not involve the use of a loud voice.
- ▲ Instead of calling out across a room, encourage your child to come closer to someone s/he wants to speak to. Praise your child for doing this.
- ▲ Second hand smoke is not good for vocal cords.
- ▲ Try to reduce background noise; for example the TV and radio, when you are listening to your child so that s/he doesn't need a raised voice.
- ▲ Praise your child for using a quiet voice.
- ▲ Model good voice use to your child. Demonstrate the way to care for a voice by doing the things listed here.

IF YOUR CHILD SPEAKS TOO LOUDLY

- ▲ Praise your child when s/he uses a quiet voice. For example, "I really like it when you use that quiet voice".
- ▲ When your child is talking to you, try to give your full attention so that s/he doesn't feel like s/he needs to shout to be heard.
- ▲ Instead of calling out across a room, encourage your child to come closer. Praise your child for doing this.
- ▲ Try to reduce background noise; for example, the TV and radio, when you are listening to your child so that s/he doesn't need to raise his/her voice to be heard.
- ▲ Model good voice use to your child. Demonstrate the way to care for a voice by doing the things listed here.

IF YOUR CHILD SPEAKS VERY QUIETLY

- ▲ Praise your child when s/he uses a louder voice eg, "I really like the way you used a bigger voice that time – it was really easy to hear what you were saying".
- ▲ Respond to the meaning of what your child is saying more than to how they are speaking.
- ▲ Encourage and praise your child for non-speaking activities – build his/her confidence as much as possible.

Are you Concerned that Your Child may be Stuttering?

'Fluency' refers to the way our words flow easily and naturally. Dysfluency (stuttering) refers to speech disruptions, such as repetitions of sounds or syllables, extension of sounds or periods during which speech production is 'blocked'. Many children go through a period of what is known as 'normal nonfluency'. This often occurs when their language is going through a period of rapid development and they have a lot to say. They are beginning to talk like an adult but are not quite ready to do so resulting in the repetition of some words and some hesitation and reformulation of what they are trying to say.

For most children, this type of 'stuttering' does not usually last longer than about three months. If your child stutters for longer than this time or at any time shows anxiety about his/her speech, contact a Speech-language Therapist.

YOU CAN ASSIST YOUR CHILD'S FLUENCY BY DOING THE FOLLOWING

- ▲ **Listen** to what your child has to say. What your child has to say is more important than how they say it.
- ▲ Ask the adults in the family to **slow down** their speech.
- ▲ **Reduce** the number of questions you ask and give your child time to answer.
- ▲ **Take turns** with talking. Be sure your child has time to talk without interruption and that your child allows others to have their turn too.
- ▲ Keep easy **eye contact** when you are talking to your child especially when they are dysfluent.
- ▲ Allow your child to **finish**, don't finish a word or sentence for him/her.
- ▲ **Pause** for a second before responding to allow your child to take his/her time with talking.
- ▲ **Praise** your child for the things s/he does well to encourage self-confidence.

Communication Observation Sample Record Sheet

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Date: _____

RECORD OBSERVATIONS HERE

PARENT/CAREGIVER COMMENTS

HOW DOES THIS CHILD'S COMMUNICATION COMPARE WITH THE NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR HIS/HER AGE AND CULTURE?

Observations made by: _____

Monitoring Communication Checklist

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Date of Enrolment: _____ Date: _____

Name of Centre: _____

Staff member completing form: _____

CONCERN RAISED WITH REGARD TO:		CONCERN RAISED BY:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Centre staff	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stuttering	<input type="checkbox"/> Speech sounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/caregiver	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE CONCERN:

ACTION TAKEN:

<input type="checkbox"/> Speech sample taken (attach)	<input type="checkbox"/> Referred for hearing assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Handout given to parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Language sample taken (attach)
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication observation completed (attach)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

PLAN:

<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor for _____ weeks/months	<input type="checkbox"/> No further action	<input type="checkbox"/> Review date / /
<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to GSE	<input type="checkbox"/> Diaried	

PLANNED STRATEGIES TO HELP DURING MONITORING PERIOD

OUTCOME OF REVIEW

Signed by (Staff member): _____ Date: _____

Signed by (Parent/caregiver): _____ Date: _____