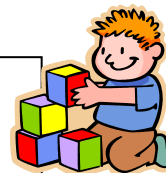




Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Speech and Language Therapy Department Dublin North City Area (North West Dublin)



Help your child develop speech sounds

Speech sounds develop gradually. Some speech sounds are easier than others for children to use and it is quite normal for some sounds not to develop appropriately until 7 years of age.

Is there anything I should avoid doing or saying?

- Avoid asking your child to repeat things after you. Don't say "say car". If your child could say it correctly, they probably would!
- Avoid making talking something your child worries about, by showing him how pleased you are that he is trying his best.
- Do not correct your child's speech mistakes. Instead, say the word correctly after him so that he hears the correct pronunciation:
 - **Child:** "Tar"
 - **Adult:** "That's right! It is a car. The car goes fast".
- Tell other family members and friends that it is important not to correct your child's speech mistakes.
- If you can not understand your child, do not pretend that you can. Get your child to show you what they mean or tell you more.
- Do not use your child's mistakes yourself in conversation! Ask family members not to do this also, e.g. avoid using the word 'tat' for 'cat', even if your child uses the word 'tat'.
- Don't assume your child is being lazy if they are struggling to use the correct sounds.
- Don't compare your child to others, all children are different.



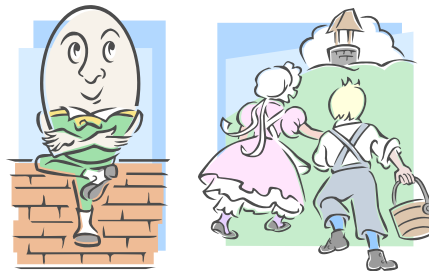
How can I help my child with his/her speech?

- Say words clearly, slowly and correctly for your child to hear.
- Respond with attention and praise when your child makes any attempt to speak. Let him know how pleased you are he is talking, even if he is not speaking clearly.
- Don't be afraid to send your child to school or pre-school because of his speech difficulties. Encourage your child to mix with other children as much as possible.
- Let your child watch your face, lips and tongue as you form sounds and words.
- Encourage your child to listen and join in as you sing nursery rhymes and songs.

- Be a good listener – remove noisy distractions, turn down the television and give your child time when they are learning to speak.
- Your Speech & Language Therapist will advise you on a specific plan to help your child's speech sound development.

Useful Activities (Always ensure your child is listening to you):

- Look at picture books together – name things and talk about the pictures so your child is hearing lots of correct speech. Hearing emerging sounds in games and stories provides natural models for your children.
- Listening to the sound of real objects with eyes closed, e.g., a child's rattle, a spoon banging a cup, a selection of their toys, etc. Children guess and name.
- Sound bingo – listening to sounds on tape and covering the correct picture, can make or buy.
- Sound walk – your child draws pictures or write down the names of the sounds they hear on the walk.
- Clapping or tapping rhythms – as you say nursery rhymes clap the rhythm, for older children see if they can clap the number of syllables in a word, e.g., cow = 1 clap, apple = 2 claps, elephant = 3 claps.
- Sound – action games, your child must listen for a sound before doing a task, e.g., building a tower with blocks, he must wait and listen for the sound of a rattle (hold behind your back) before adding the next block.
- Listen/singing nursery rhymes together.



Over time, as your child hears more and more correct sounds used, when ready they will begin to change their patterns and you will hear more correct words.