

## Speech Sound Difficulties

When a child has a speech sound error it is important to follow a step by step technique in order to help them learn how to use the sound in their everyday talking. This approach can be used to teach children lots of different sounds and should not be rushed. Follow the steps below to teach them how to use a new sound:

1. Practice saying the sound on it's own. Until the child can produce the sound on it's own they will not be able to use it in more complex sequences. Make sure that you teach them to say the sound, not the letter e.g. 't' not 'tuh'. They may have to listen and watch you saying the sound before they are able to do it too. It is sometimes helpful for you to describe how the sound is made e.g. 'use the front of your tongue, it is a quick sound'.

Once the child can say the sound accurately and does not need any prompting in order to be able to say it you can move onto step 2.

2. Practice saying the sound with vowel sounds. Some children find it easiest to say the vowel first and some children find it easiest to say the vowel last. Try both and focus on the blends that the child finds easiest to produce first. Make sure that when they join the two sounds together that they blend the sounds together smoothly and do not leave a pause between the two sounds. For example, 'too' 'tee' 'tah' 'tow' or 'oot' 'eet' 'aht' 'owt'.

When the child can produce the blends accurately without your support to 90% accuracy you can move onto step 3.

3. You can now try using the sound at a single word level. Again, some children find this easiest at the end of words and some children are more accurate when the sound is made at the beginning of words. Practice the sound in the position that the child finds easiest first. You can also try practicing the sound in the middle of words. For example, 'tea' 'tiger' 'hot' 'light' 'butter'.

When the child can say the words independently without needing your support to remember to use their sound move onto step 4. If they are achieving 90% accuracy you can also move onto the next step but continue to practice at a single word level in addition if errors are made.

4. Practice using the sound in short phrases. You can use one word containing the sound that you are working on first and when the child becomes more confident attempt to include two target sounds. For example, 'the tiger is orange' 'two tigers on the grass'.

The child should be able to say phrases accurately 90% of the time, without requiring any support from you. Once they can do this you can move onto step 5.

5. Generalisation. The next step is to practice some talking activities so that the child learns to use their sound in their spontaneous speech. These activities can be practiced wherever e.g. at home, in the car, at Nana's house, for 5-10 minutes daily. Some ideas of activities are as follows:

- Eye spy (using the target sound)
- Guess Who or any game where you need to ask or answer short questions.
- My Nana went shopping (choose food/shopping items that begin with the target sound).
- Describing pictures or reading/making up stories.
- Finding words beginning or ending with the target sound to make a scrapbook. You can do this by looking in magazines, flyers, newspapers etc. Ask your child to tell you something about the word or find pictures to go with it.
- Listing words beginning/ending with the target sound (e.g. 's') when you are at playtime (seesaw, seat, sgrass) / in the car (steering wheel, seat).
- Have a chat! Give them a prompt before you ask that you are listening for the nice clear target sound. Your child will have to think about what they are thinking and saying for this activity.
- Begin a reward chart for your child. If they use the target sound OUTSIDE speech practise time give them a sticker. If your child gets a certain amount of stickers then they get a prize (a sweet, extra TV time).

**If you would like further information, resources or ideas for any of the steps please contact your Speech and Language Therapist at [name@integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk](mailto:name@integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk)**