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SPEECH SOUND AWARENESS PACK



Information and activities

What is speech sound (or phonological) awareness?

It is the ability to tell the difference between sounds, and to understand how words are made up.

Why is it important?

Understanding that words can be broken down into parts, and that they are made up of sounds, is an important stage in speech and literacy development.

For a child to use sounds correctly in his or her speech, they need to first be able to perceive the differences between sounds. This can then help them to monitor their own speech, and use target sounds more consistently in their everyday speech.

Working on speech sound awareness not only can help the child’s speech sound development, but is also found to have a positive effect on reading and literacy skills.

General tips when doing the activities

* Try to find a time when the child is alert and attentive.
* Keep background noise to a minimum, i.e. turn the TV and radio off.
* It is better to do a few minutes each day, than a long practice session occasionally.
* If appropriate, get brothers and sisters or friends involved. This will make it more fun for the child, and will take the pressure off them.
* It is helpful to have rewards for the child. These can be immediate, such as posting pictures in a box, finding pictures/objects that are hidden etc., or it may be a treat at the end of the week if they have tried hard.
* Give children *lots* of praise and encouragement. Don’t worry if a child finds an activity difficult at first. You can help them by giving them lots of clues and showing them how to do it. The more they practice the more they will pick it up.

Further ideas and some online games can be found at:

https://speechandlanguage.info/parents/activities/parent-portal-speech-activities

Syllable Clapping

**What is it, and how does it help?**

Words are made up of both sounds and syllables (or ‘beats’). Some words have one syllable such as *car*, *hat* and *ball*. Other words can be made up of a number of syllables, for example *monkey* (2 syllables) *aeroplane* (3 syllables), *caterpillar* (4 syllables).

Being able to break down words into their syllables is an important skill for improving awareness of speech and how words are made up. Clapping out syllables can also help a child’s production of words, particularly if some syllables are missed off in their own speech.

**How can we practice it at home?**

Start with short words containing 1 or 2 syllables, and gradually use longer words when the child is ready. Below are lists of some word examples. You could find objects or pictures to clap out. Some pictures are provided as examples on the next page. Always say the word slowly and clearly as you clap out the beats.

Find things when you are going for a walk, or on the bus etc. It is a good idea to start with the name of the child and people close to him e.g. ‘Joe’ (1 clap), ‘Mu-mmy’ (2 claps)

1 syllable 2 syllables 3 syllables 4 syllables

Car Butter Violin Alligator

Bus Letter Elephant Caterpillar

Cup Tiger Banana Helicopter

Bin Apple Potato Television

Four Carrot Computer Rhinoceros

Shoe Window Telephone

Key Mirror Aeroplane

Doll Teddy Sellotape

Door Camel Tomato

Chair Pillow Caravan

  

  

  

  



**Did I say it right or a bit funny? (Error detection)**

**What is it, and how does it help?**

Being able to hear differences in speech is an important skill for understanding that sounds make up words, and that changes in speech sounds affect how a word is heard by others.

Listening to how other people make mistakes helps the child to monitor his or her own speech. It also takes the pressure off them to ‘say’ the words, as they are correcting you instead! It is fun for a child to sometimes play the role of a teacher!

**How can we practice it at home?**

## Beginning sounds

Find a selection of pictures or objects beginning with a range of sounds (e.g. soap, pen, book, fork, cup, dog etc.)

Tell the child that he/she is going to be your teacher, and they have to listen carefully to how you say a word. They need to tell you if you are saying it right or a bit funny!

Cut out the happy face and sad face, or the tick and cross from the next page. When the child hears you say the word correctly, put the picture or object under the happy face (or tick). If it is incorrect, put it under the sad face (or cross).

Begin by missing off the first sound completely e.g. say ‘ook’ for book, and then change the first sound for a different sound e.g. ‘cook’ or ‘took’ for book. Remember to say the word correctly sometimes!

When incorrect, ask your child to ‘help you say the word’ and use the correct sound at the beginning.

## Final Sounds

Play the same game as above, but this time miss off the last sound of a word, e.g. “lea” for leaf or “boa” for boat.

When your child is able to do that, change the last sound e.g. “leat” or “boaf”

It is great if others get involved too, such as brothers and sisters or friends. Always remember to give the child lots of encouragement, and have fun!

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LISTENING GAMES (Non-speech sounds)

**Why do they help?**

Helping a child improve their listening skills is important for helping them tune into sounds, and increase their awareness and ability to hear subtle differences between sounds.

It is important to give your child lots of experience listening to sounds, and to encourage good listening and attention. These are key skills in developing speech and language, as it enables children to become more aware of sounds and words.

*Guess The Instrument*

Choose two sets of matching noisemakers/ instruments.

These may include shakers, bells, drums made of

saucepans and wooden spoons etc.

Let the child play with the instruments and listen to

the sounds they make. Describe the sounds. Are they loud or quiet?

Hide one set of instruments behind a screen, and a matching set in front of your child. Play one of the instruments behind the screen, and see if the child can show can show you which one you played.

Gradually increase the number of instruments to choose from, and see if the child can remember a sequence of 2 or 3 sounds.

*Sound pots*

This is a similar activity requiring finer discrimination between sounds.

Fill empty plastic bottles or pots with various materials. These may include sand, pebbles, water, coins and so on.

Again, have two sets, and ask your child to show you which one he/she heard.

*Hunt the music box*

Hide a music box or musical toy somewhere in the room while your child waits outside the room.

Ask him/her to find the toy by locating the sound.

*Other game ideas*

Play games that encourage good waiting, turn-taking and listening. These could include the following:

* Play ‘ready steady go’ with wind-up cars, marble runs or pop-up toys.
* Copy beats on a drum
* Match sounds to pictures, e.g. animal noises.
* Play musical statues, musical islands/chairs etc.

**WHAT’S THAT SOUND? (Speech sounds)**

The following are some general tips for helping children to tell the difference between speech sounds.

Begin with 2 or 3 sounds, and start with ones that sound quite different, for example ‘s’ (a picture of a snake may be used) and ‘d’ (this may be a picture of a drum).

Using the sound pictures, try the following activities. You can gradually add more sounds when the child is ready.

* Say a sound, and ask your child to point to the one you say. Use rewards such as building towers, marble run, pop-up-pirate, etc! Your child may enjoy throwing a ball or beanbag onto the sound he or she hears.
* Hide a piece of jigsaw under each sound picture. When your child points to the correct sound, he or she can put the piece in the jigsaw. Another piece can then be hidden in its place.
* Put one sound picture in front of your child. Say a range of sounds (e.g. ‘*m’, ‘d’, ‘p’, ‘l’, ‘s’*) and each time he or she hears the sound in front of them, they put a brick on a tower, or colour in a bit of the picture, or put a ball down a tube etc.

 

**WHAT SOUND IS AT THE BEGINNING?**

* Start with 2 or 3 sounds, and make sure the child is familiar with the sound pictures.
* Try to avoid using words with ‘sound blends’ (i.e. two consonants which are said together) e.g. ‘*pl*ate’, ‘*sn*owman’ and ‘*fl*ower.’ Instead, use words where the sound comes before a vowel, e.g. ‘*p*ig’, *‘s*un’ and ‘*f*ish’.
* Play similar games as in the previous section (*What’s that sound?)* Say simple words beginning with one of the sounds, and ask the child to point to the sound he or she hears at the beginning.
* Clearly emphasise the sound at first. It may be helpful to use a sign/gesture to help.
* Find objects and/or pictures beginning with 2 or 3 sounds, and help your child to sort them into the different sounds. A few examples are given below:

#### P S T F K/C B

Pen Sock Table Fish Cat Ball

Pig Sausages Tap Fire Coat Bell

Piano Sun Telly Fox Kite Boy

Pot Seal Toad Food Kettle Book

Pan Sandwich Toes Football King Boot

Pie Sand Tissues Fork Cow Bag

Pirate Sofa Tyre Feather Key Bike

Party Sea Turtle Fingers Car Baby

#### D G Sh

Dog Dinner Go Goat Sheep Shop

Desk Donut Garden Girl Ship Shampoo

Dad Door Ghost Game Shorts Shoes

Dance Doll Gorilla Gate Shell Shark

The pictures on the following page can be used with the child to practice sorting words into 2 sounds – ‘d’ and ‘s’. This is just an example, and you can adapt the activities according to the child’s needs.

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**Words:**

Dog, Dance, Doll, Dice, Door, Donut

Sandwich, Sofa, Socks, Sand, Sun, Saw

# WHAT SOUND IS AT THE END?

To develop a child’s awareness of sounds further, encourage them to listen to the sounds at the end of words. This is also an important task if a child misses off final sounds in words.

* Carry out similar activities as the ones suggested in the previous sections. Begin with 2 or 3 sounds only, and use the sound pictures as before.
* Activities may include sorting objects or pictures into final sounds, making posters (e.g. words ending in ‘f’ and words ending in ‘p’), or an adult reads out a selection of words, and the child points to which sound they hear at the end of each word. Clearly emphasise the final sound of a word to help your child, e.g. lea**f,** ta**p**. Some word lists are provided at the bottom to give you some examples.
* If a child is missing off the final sounds of words, it can be helpful to sort words into those with a consonant sound at the end (e.g. card, soap, fork, goat) and those without a consonant sound at the end (e.g. car, sew, four, go)

Try to keep the words simple, and not too long. Avoid words that have a number of sounds together at the end, i.e. use a word such as ‘sit’ rather than ‘sixth’.

Remember, don’t worry about the spelling of the words, but think about what the end *sound* is rather than the letter. E.g. the last sound in ‘house’ is ‘*s*’ even though the last letter is *e.*

#### \_P \_S \_T \_F \_K/C \_B

Up Horse Rat Leaf Lock Cab

Rope House Cat Knife Sock Robe

Lip Mouse Boat Laugh Leek Job

Top Case Foot Chief Beak Web

Cup Grass Mat Giraffe Shake Cub

Chip Bus Hat Scarf Rake Rub

Tap Face Coat Calf Duck Tub

Cap Ice Bat Half Pick Crab

#### \_D \_G \_Sh

Card Food Dog Rug Push Mash

Sad Bad Frog Mug Rush Crash

Read Hide Wig Log Brush Bush

Bed Ride Dig Jug Fish Dish

These pictures can be used with your child to practice sorting words into 2 end sounds – ‘d’ and ‘s’. Again, this is just an example, and you can adapt the activities to your child’s needs.

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**Words:**

House, Mouse, Bus, Horse, Case, Nurse, Dress

Bed, Bread, Read, Red, Lead

**RHYME**

#### Why is it important?

Another important skill for both speech awareness and literacy development is the awareness and understanding of rhyme. A young child may not yet be able to know what we mean by ‘rhyme’, but there are many ways that we can give them experience in listening to rhyming words.

Rhyming words are words that have the same ending, but a different beginning sound, and the vowel sounds are always the same.

### How can we help at home?

* Sing nursery rhymes together.
* Choose a familiar nursery rhyme, but deliberately miss out a rhyming word, e.g. ‘Jack and Jill went up the \_\_\_\_\_’, or ‘Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you \_\_\_\_\_\_’.

  

* There are many children’s books available that have words that rhyme all the way through.
* Read poems, and encourage them to say some of the words as they become more familiar with them.
* Try the activities on the next page, and see if the child can help you find the word that rhymes. If they are not ready to do this, show them which pictures to stick on, and then read out the words so that they can hear the pattern.

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|  **Cat** |  **Hat** |  |
|   **Door** |  **Saw** |  |
|   **Boat** |  **Goat** |  |
| Tree | Bee |  |

Cut out the pictures at the bottom, and then stick them in the gaps to complete the rhyming sequences

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| Tea | 4Four | Coat | Bat |

**SPECIFIC SOUND PRACTICE**

A child may have difficulty producing certain sounds.

The following ideas and activities can be used in everyday situations to encourage children to use target sounds in words.

### Modelling the words

Don’t correct the child’s speech by telling him that it’s wrong. Instead, clearly repeat what the child has said using the correct sounds.

For example:

**Child**: “my dock”

**Adult**: “yes, it’s your ***S***ock”

This allows your child to hear the correct model, and also lets him or her know that you have understood what they have said.

If your child has been practicing the sound in words, but sometimes forgets to use it in his or her everyday speech, you can gently remind him or her to use the sound. E.g. ‘Remember, that word has the snake sound at the beginning – ***S***ock’

## **Bombardment of a target sound**

* Point out things beginning with the target sound. This may include when you are on the bus, walking in the park, or just looking out of the window! For example, if practicing the ‘s’ sound, say things like “look, there’s some **S**and”, “it’s very **S**unny.” At first clearly emphasise the target sound so he or she can really hear it.
* Read a list of words beginning with the target sound.
* Focus on words beginning with the target sound in a book etc.
* Try playing Eye-Spy, e.g. “I can see something beginning with the ‘K’ sound”. You could make it easier by having a small selection of objects or pictures beginning with different sounds.