

Advice to Promote Speech Sound Development

1. Do not draw attention to your child's speech sound errors by continually correcting him or asking him to repeat what he has said. This will only make him very aware of his errors and him reluctant to talk.
2. Do not show your child that you are anxious about his sound errors. A young child can pick up on such feelings and attitudes and will be less likely to attempt to communicate if he feels his speech provokes anxiety.
3. Do not make fun of your child's sound errors as this may either cause him to continue if your child likes to receive attention, or may make him less likely to speak due to fear of humiliation.
4. Allow your child time to speak by taking time to listen. Whether or not your child is aware of his errors, he will be more relaxed about speaking and more likely to talk if given plenty of time.
5. Listen as much as possible to your child and his speech as it will become more understandable with familiarity.
6. Show your child that speech is fun. Teach nursery rhymes and songs. This will promote greater enjoyment from speech and will help with speech rhythms.
7. Give your child the opportunity to mix and play with other children of the same age. He will get a great deal of stimulation from them.
8. Always provide good models for your child by using the correct speech sounds. In this way, he can observe and learn from you.
9. Model the correct response, eg if your child says "My red tup", you can reply by saying "Yes, your red *cup*" but don't ask them to repeat it. This avoids drawing attention to these errors that may make your child self-conscious, and also allows your child to observe and learn from you.
10. Reward your child for correct and appropriate speech attempts. Any progress you observe, however small, can be rewarded eg by smiling or praising him, or allowing him to play with his favourite toy etc.
11. If you have partially understood what your child has said, acknowledge that part you did hear and then question the part you didn't eg "On Saturday you went ... where?"

12. Take time to play with your child and to talk to him. Remember that it is only through hearing speech that he will learn to talk. Use every available opportunity, eg when dressing your child tell him what you are doing and give him the names of the objects.