

ARTICULATION

Parents play a key role in the development of their child's speech and language skills. Many parents want to help their child but are not sure exactly what to do. Once your child starts therapy, the speech language pathologist will have specific homework to do with your child. In the meantime, the following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Be a good listener

Listen to what your child is trying to tell you and don't spend all the time trying to correct the child's articulation errors. Respond to the message.

2. Model good speech

When your child makes an error, repeat the message correctly but don't ask your child to repeat after you. Children learn by listening. They need to listen to good speech. For example, your child might say "I tant fit dis wid". You could repeat and model "I can't fix the lid". You could also add "Maybe I can fix it." You are providing a model of correct speech for your child to hear and imitate. You are also continuing the conversation. Also, remember to speak clearly and slowly.

3. Expect errors

All adults and children make some errors in articulation.

4. Discourage others from talking for your child.

When others talk for your child, it is a missed opportunity for your child to practice tricky sounds.

5. When you are not able to understand, be honest.

When you do not understand what your child says, admit that you do not understand. Don't pretend that you understand by saying "That's nice" or "Yes, that's right". Ask the child to tell you again; "I didn't quite hear what you said. Could you say that again?" When the child does repeat the word or phrase, watch for any gestures or eye movement in particular. You could also say "Show me what you are talking about". When you understand part of your child's sentence, let the child know. For example "You are talking about the dog. What did she do?"

6. Provide a need for the child to talk.

You can create situations that require your child to talk by not giving them all the materials they need for a task or project (giving them paper but no crayons/pencils), by giving them the wrong thing (e.g., a bowl of water instead of a cup of water), by giving them a choice between things (do you want yogurt or a banana?), by giving them too little (it's time for snack, give them one Goldfish cracker), or by setting them up to need your help (by keeping things out of reach or by having lids on too tight).

7. Use language the child is able to understand.

Your child will be more engaged in the activity if it is at their level.

8. Provide the child with many listening experiences.

You can narrate your day, placing emphasis on words with tricky sounds. The more your child can hear the correct sounds, the easier it will be for them to make the sounds.

9. Speak slowly and clearly; exaggerate any tricky sounds correctly.

By exaggerating the sound, your child can pay close attention to how you made that sound, and where the sound is in the word.

10. Encourage the child to look at you while you are talking.

Watching how you make a sound can encourage your child to try the same thing. Looking at you also helps your focus on what you are trying to show them.

11. Use a mirror.

Have the child look in the mirror as you and they talk. This way the child will be able to see, hear and feel the way the different sounds are made.

Adapted from : Parent Articles 2: More Articles to Enhance Parent Involvement, Edited by Anthony B. De Deo, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Communication Skill Builders, Tuscon Arizona

Here are some additional resources that may be of interest:

The Speech Scoop

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheSpeechScoop>

Speech Language Therapy dot com

https://www.speech-language-therapy.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=99:encourage&catid=11:admin&Itemid=120