

Articulation: dos and don'ts



When children are having trouble making certain sounds, it is really important not to punish them or make them feel bad about their speech, but encourage them to keep trying. Praise all of their attempts.

Here are some things you can do to help your child make a sound:

- Practise every day. You will achieve much more by doing a little bit every day instead of in one long speech session.
- Use fun games and lots of encouragement.
- Explain how the sound is made by telling them what they need to do with their lips and tongue. Encourage them to look at your mouth and listen.
- Always finish with a positive comment, or an activity your child can do well.
- Praise successes and stay positive.
- Reward your child immediately after every good attempt of a sound, and explain why it was good. For example:
 - o You're trying so hard!
 - o Good, you remembered to put your teeth together for 's'
 - o Great /k/ sound!
- Correct any mistakes in a positive way – praise them for trying and show them how they can get it right next time.

Try not to:

- Persist until they 'get-it-right', as this is both frustrating for you and the child. Give them three attempts, and if they're not succeeding, praise their efforts and move on.
- Say to your child that they are being 'lazy' or 'stubborn'. As soon as you start to feel frustrated, praise them for having a go and move on.
- Focus on more than one sound at a time, as this will confuse most children.
- Expect too much too soon. Learning new sounds takes time.

Adapted from: Brown, Jenny. & Western Sydney Area Health Service (N.S.W.). (1994). Pre-school communication workshop : an inservice programme for staff working in early childhood settings. Merrylands, N.S.W. : Western Sydney Area Health Service



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