

Speech Activities

Listening to Individual Speech Sounds // All Ages

If your child is having trouble producing specific speech sounds, first check the age at which that sound is typically acquired (on the Communication Carousel and speech sounds chart). Learning the speech sounds of English is a gradual process, and there can be variation between children in the order specific sounds are acquired.

If you have concerns about your child's production of a particular speech sound, and they are able to play all of the games on the 'Listening to sounds' handout successfully, you can try the following listening games. If difficulties persist, then please refer to the Speech and Language therapy service.

Listening to Individual Speech Sounds

- Children learn speech sounds by watching others speak and by listening to clear models of words. Children usually hear sounds spoken quickly in words and sentences, so practising listening to speech sounds on their own can help them to learn to produce those sounds.
- Some children find it difficult to hear the difference between speech sounds. These children particularly need support because unless they can hear the difference between the speech sounds they will find it very difficult to produce them in words.
- Listening activities relieve the pressure on the child to say the sound he/she finds difficult. Confidence can develop gradually thus allowing the child to experiment with the articulation when he/she feels comfortable.

Your child must be able to hear the difference between the correct sound and his substituted sound, when there are produced on their own. Play a game where **you** produce the target sound mixed up with the child's substitution, e.g. 'k' or 't'. Your child points to the written symbol/picture when he hears you produce.

Choose two speech sounds to work on. One of the sounds should be a sound the child can already produce, and the other sound is the 'target sound'. If your child has difficulties with lots of speech sounds, try to choose two sounds that look and sound very different. For example, 'd' and 'p' sound different when they are articulated but are visually similar when written down. It would be easier to focus on 'd' and 'f' which look and sound different.

Show the picture of the letter (large lower case letters on card or Jolly Phonics). Say e.g. '*s**Sammy Snake says* *s*' **Emphasize the letter sound not the letter name**

Try to encourage your child to **listen** to the sounds when you play the following games. Ask him/her to look at you as you say them so that s/he can see how the sounds are made. S/he may start to copy and articulate the sound but should not be asked to do so.



of the letters on the table

- Say the sound. Your child puts the brick on the right sound picture
- How tall can s/he make the towers?



Skittles

- Use two skittles. Stick a sound picture on each skittle
- Your child has to knock over the skittle that matches the sound you say

Hide and Seek

- Make three copies of each sound picture
- Hide them around the room or out in the garden/playground
- Say a sound and your child has to find the missing picture

Any game with a piece for each turn (Pop up Pirate, Tumbling Monkeys, a puzzle etc.)

- Put a sword/monkey on top of each of the sound pictures
- You say a sound, your child can take that monkey/pirate and take a turn in the game



Beanbag Game

- Use one cardboard box or container per sound. Stick a sound picture on each box
- Use beanbags, balls or socks tied in a knot
- Say the sound and your child has to throw the beanbag into the matching box