

For further information about this service contact:

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Notes

Speech and Language Therapy Service Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Developing Speech Sounds

If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.

Developing Speech Sounds

The ability to use sounds builds up during the first six or seven years of your child's life. The sounds usually develop gradually in an organised way.

There are several ways you can help -

- Accept your child's attempt at a word and also say it back to him/her in a clear and simple way. For example, if your child says: "tup, mum-my" (meaning 'cup'), adult says: "yes, cup".
- Find a toy that could make the sound to practise in play, for example a snake can say ssss . This helps your child notice the sound. Sounds develop at different times. Some of the first sounds are b, d, m, and n. Some sounds, like s, ch, sh, r, and th, appear much later.
- We want to encourage your child to talk as much as possible to help practise these sounds. Correcting them or saying things like 'no, say cup' might make him/her feel anxious.
- Show your child that you understand their words. This will give them confidence to try again. Praise good talking when a word is said clearly.
- Tell your child that they said it well and repeat the word too, 'you said cup really well then'.
- Set aside a few minutes of quiet time, ideally every day. Turn off the television or radio when you are talking, playing or looking at books together. This will help your child to listen to your speech more easily.
- Talk about a television programme after you have watched it together. Take turns to say what happened and which bit you liked. Copy the actions, sounds, noises and songs too.
- Face your child when you are talking together. Sit opposite each other when playing or talking. This helps your child listen and look to see how the sounds are made.
- Speak simply in short sentences at these special times, for example, "here's teddy", "hello teddy", "cuddle teddy". This gives your child time to listen to words and how they sound. It's easier for them to copy if you keep it simple.
- Take your child's dummy or fingers out of their mouth when they speak.
- Listen to your child with patience however unclear they are. Ask relatives or friends to do these things too. Talking should be fun, not hard work, so help others to join in.

Fun with Sounds

It will help to encourage speech sounds in play.

Have a go with the following sounds:

- d d d - drum
- ch ch ch - train
- g g g - tug boat/baby noise
- nee na - siren noise
- la la la - sing to baby
- shh - water sound/be quiet sound
- b b b - ball bouncing
- ssss - snake
- t t t - clock ticking/water dripping
- mmm - motorbike noise
- fff - pump up a tyre
- ck ck ck - camera click
- Animal sounds are great fun to use in play too - moo, baa, quack.