

## **How to help children with phonological needs**

### **Have conversations with the child where you know the topic being spoken about**

This way you will have more chance of understanding what they are saying.

### **Highlight sounds your child finds difficult**

If they are finding it difficult to say a specific sound accurately within a word repeat what they have said highlighting the appropriate sound either by extending it or using an action.

Try **not** to encourage them to copy what you have said if they are struggling to make the sound.

### **Used forced alternatives**

If you know the child is able to say a word more clearly you could give them a choice to help them correct themselves rather than an adult trying to correct them as this is not always helpful e.g.

Child: "It's a bish"

Adult: "Do you think it's a bish or fish?".

### **Avoid direct correction**

Instead of telling a child they have said a word wrong, give them a clear repetition of how the word/sentence should be said.

### **Para-phrase what the child has said**

When a child tells you something, repeat the main points back to them so they know they have been understood.

### **Use a Home-school book**

Have a book where parents and school can write down what has happened that day/weekend so that when you are talking to the child you have some knowledge of what they might be trying to say or tell you.

### **Ask other children to interpret**

Other children are usually far better at understanding each other than adults. Usually children with speech difficulties don't mind other children helping out.

### **Encourage gesture/showing to supplement unclear speech**

If a child has problems getting their message across, tell them its ok to show you, draw, and take you to the thing they are talking about – anything that helps.

**Build listening skills**

Encourage listening to sounds around them in the environment, both noisy and quiet. Encourage listening to letter sounds in words if they are at an age where they can do this reasonably easily.

**Music and rhythm activities**

Encourage listening and production of listening and beating out rhythms, both with and without words to accompany the music.

**Syllable identification**

Clap/stamp/beat out the number of syllables in a word. Children's own names, family and pet names are a good place to start. Its useful to begin with words with different number of syllables eg 'Beth-an-y', 'mum-my', 'dad'.

**Play with the rhyming words**

Have fun and play games with words that rhyme – they don't have to be real words eg hat, fat, sat, mat, cat, lat, wat gat etc

**Use of letter sounds**

Encourage children to know the difference between the letter name and the sound it makes eg letter 's' is called 'ess' but makes a 'ssss' sound.

**Letter sound listening and sorting**

Help children to listen to letter sounds and put same sounds together. Build up to the point where they can listen to words with different sounds at the beginning and sort them into the ones which begin with the same sounds – start with a choice of just two sounds eg sun, sea, tea, tap, sink, tie – sort into two piles, beginning with 's' or 't'.

**Gently encourage your child to copy you.**

If he succeeds give him lots of praise. Even if he attempts the sound but doesn't succeed give him lots of praise for trying.

If he doesn't want to attempt it you continue to tell him the sounds, don't put pressure on him to say it. Just hearing an adult making the sound will help increase his knowledge and awareness of the sounds.