

How to Help Your Child Practice New Speech Skills

In speech therapy sessions your child will learn new ways to move their jaw, lips and tongue and say new speech sounds and words. It takes time and practice for new speech skills to develop and become automatic. Regular home practice is an important way of giving your child more opportunities to practice and learn new speech skills. You are a key member of your child's treatment team, and we want speech practice to be positive and successful for you and your child.

There are 4 core skills that will help you work with your child during speech practice activities:

1. Model for speech	2. Create opportunities to practice words	3. Give feedback	4. Help your child say a word more accurately
Modeling shows your child what to say and how to say it.	Look at your child, model the word, pause and wait for your child to copy you.	Watch and listen carefully when your child says a word.	Model the word slowly and ask them to copy you.
Make eye contact with your child so they can see how you move your mouth and hear what you say.	Start a sentence, pause and wait for your child to fill in the blank (e.g., "Let's pour some juice in your")	Tell them what they did well or tell them what to do differently to meet their speech goal.	Say the word together, slowly. <i>Your child's SLP will show you other ways such as:</i>
Say the word slowly. This gives your child extra time to process what you said and how you said it.	Offer your child a choice. Make one of the choices the word you want your child to say (e.g., "Do you want to drink or?")	Praise their efforts.	Telling your child how to make a specific movement (e.g., "make a round mouth").
It is easier for your child to imitate a word when you say it slowly than when you say it quickly.	Ask a question where your child has to use the target word in the answer. (e.g., "What fell on the floor?")	Give feedback when you see your child needs it. You do not need to do this on every response.	Showing your child how to make the movement (e.g. model a round mouth). Using a gesture, letter or symbol to represent a movement/sound (e.g. pointing to your lips or printing the letter "p" to cue the sound).

Your child's Speech-Language Pathologist will suggest activities for you to do with your child and tell you the words to practice. The first step is to schedule 5 to 10 minutes to spend alone with your child. Collect and hold on to the materials. Be the keeper of the pieces! This creates opportunities for your child to use the target words. (They will have to tell you what they want/need.) Sit together at a table and be face to face. It is important to take turns. It's more fun and it lets you model and use the words you want your child to say at their turn.

1. MODEL the word as you take your turn in the activity.
2. CREATE an opportunity for your child to say the word. Wait for your child to respond.
3. RESPOND to what your child says. Help them improve the accuracy of production if needed.
4. REPEAT steps 1 – 3 until you finish the activity.

It's important to keep speech practice motivating and fun. Please speak with your child's Speech-Language Pathologist if you have any questions or need additional information.