

Tips for Teaching Sounds

Establish a concept for the sound by giving it a personality!

Make the sound "come alive" in a child's mind.

The following tips will help a child remember what to do with his tongue, lips, jaw and teeth.

B

The "Bubble Sound"

Tell the child to place his lips together and blow his cheeks out like a balloon and then turn his "speech motor" on. Have him put his hand on his Adam's apple to feel his "speech motor". Tell the child to "pop" his balloon quickly and let all the air out.

CH

The "Sneezing Sound"

Tell the child to make a **T** sound and then drag his tongue on the gum ridge blowing air out with some pressure to make a "sneezing sound". Have him practice **T** and **CH** sounds together, increasing in speed until he is using an isolated **CH** sound and compare it to a "choo-choo" sound. Use a candle to help establish this sound. Have the child say the **CH** sound with enough force to blow out a candle.

D

The "Broken Motor Sound"

Tell the child to place his tongue tip on the upper gum ridge behind his two front teeth. Have the child hold this position while he turns his "speech motor" on and off. Use a small hand mirror to show the child how his tongue "jumps down" as he turns his speech motor on and off.

E

The "Angry Cat Sound"

Tell the child to place his teeth on his lower lip and gently bite his lower lip hissing like an angry cat. You can also tell the child to use his "beaver teeth" by sticking out his front teeth. Tell him that his lower lip is "hot" and he needs to cool it off by blowing on it. Hold the back of the child's hand before your mouth so he can feel the air stream as you make this sound then have him hold his hand to his own mouth to feel the air.

G

The "Frog Sound"

Tell the child to open his mouth wide just like a frog trying to catch a bug. Tell him he cannot close his mouth because he wants a bug to fly in. Use a tongue depressor or a popsicle stick to hold the tongue tip down so that the back of the tongue can lift up and touch the soft palate (back of the mouth). Tell the child you want him to make the back of his tongue "jump up" and "pat" the back of his mouth. Have him place his hand just above his Adam's apple to feel the movement and his "speech motor". He must use his voice for this sound. Practicing a gargle will help establish this sound.

H

The "Dragon Sound"

Tell the child that he is like a dragon and he is going to blow out some hot air. Tell him to open his mouth and let out a deep breath (*hot air*). The child may place a hand over his abdomen and feel the push of the muscles required. Have him hold his hand to his own mouth to feel the hot air as it is released.

J **The “Lightsaber Sound”**

Tell the child to click on his “lightsaber” by saying a **D** sound and then move his tongue back slowly as he forms a **J** sound. He must turn on his “speech motor” to give his “lightsaber” more power. He must use his voice with this sound to make the “lightsaber” work.

K **The “Coughing Sound”**

Tell the child to open his mouth and keep it open. Use a tongue depressor or a popsicle stick to hold the tongue tip down so that the back of the tongue can lift up and touch the soft palate (back of the mouth). Have the child try to cough. Tell the child you want him to make the back of his tongue “jump up” and “touch” the back of his mouth. Have him place his hand just above his Adam’s apple to feel the movement but his “speech motor” is silent and turned off for this sound.

L **The “Lullaby Sound”**

Tell the child to lift his tongue to the center point of the gum behind his two upper front teeth and keep his mouth open. Tell him to turn on his voice and let the air escape out of the sides of his tongue and then let his tongue drop down. Use a tongue depressor or popsicle stick to prop the child’s mouth open by placing the stick between the child’s teeth and asking the child to bite softly on the stick so his mouth cannot close. Have the child lift his tongue up and down saying “la-la-la-la-la” over and over again while biting on the stick. Have him practice raising his tongue without moving his jaw.

M **The “Humming Sound”**

Tell the child to hold his lips together and let the air to come out through his nose. He must use his voice. Have the child place his finger against the mid-point of the bony structure of his nose and hum. He will be able to feel the vibrations as the sound resonates. You may also have the child place his hand under his nose and feel the air stream as it escapes when the sound is produced.

N **The “No-No Sound”**

Tell the child to elevate his tongue-tip to the gum ridge behind his two front teeth. He should use the lateral margins of his tongue to touch his side teeth so that the passage of air stream is blocked. Have him open his mouth slightly and let the air come through his nose. Have the child use a mirror to see the elevation of his tongue and place a finger by his nose to feel the air stream. Have him hold his nostrils by pinching them to hear the resonance. He can think of an old woman scolding a child and saying “no, no, no, no” to remember this sound.

NG **The “Caveman Sound”**

Tell the child to lift the back of his tongue so that it touches the soft palate. Have him open his mouth and use his voice to talk like a “caveman” saying “**NG, NG, NG**”. This sound is found in the medial and final position of words only and the most common error is omission.

P

The “Puffing Sound”

Tell the child to hold his lips together and hold his breath (*to build up air pressure in the oral cavity*). Have the child release air suddenly with a small explosion. This sound is whispered and the “*speech motor*” is turned off. Have the child place his hand on his throat so he can feel the absence of a vibration. He should also close his lips and blow up his cheeks like a balloon to release an explosion. The use of a lighted candle to show the force of the puff of air is a good illustration. Another idea is to hold a tissue by the child’s mouth so he can see the tissue move as he produces the **P** sound.

R

The “Growling Dog Sound”

Tell the child to pull his tongue back while curling the tip of the tongue up, lifting it until it almost touches the roof of his mouth. Use voice. The most common substitution for this sound is **W** so lip action must be stopped. Here is a little story to share with the child to help him realize that his tongue must do the work for this sound and not his lips: Have the child imagine that one of his siblings gets to rest on the couch all day long and eat cookies, ice-cream and watch movies while he has to do all of the chores around the house. He has to wash all of the dishes, take out the trash, sweep and mop the floor while his brother or sister is resting on the couch. Ask the child if this sounds fair to him. Then tell him that his tongue is just resting in his mouth all day and never getting up off of the couch while his lips are doing all of the work. Tell him it’s time to get that tongue working! There are some jobs for the lips to do and other jobs for the tongue to do. Then show the child different pictures of **W** words and **R** words and have the child say them emphasizing when it’s the tongue’s job or the lips’ job to help him discriminate between the two sounds. Here is another story idea to illustrate how far back the tongue needs to move in order to make an **R** sound: Have the child imagine a mean, old pirate. Then have the child imagine that pirate tying a string on to his tongue and pulling his tongue back as far as he can. Have the child say several **R** words by pulling his tongue back just like the pirate would. The use of a popsicle stick or tongue depressor will show the child how to lift his tongue. Place the popsicle stick or tongue depressor between his upper and lower front teeth and under the child’s tongue as he attempts to say an **R** sound. Move the tongue back with the stick and ask him to say the **R** sound again.

S

The “Snake Sound”

Tell the child to place the tip of his tongue on the ridge directly behind the upper front teeth. He should touch the sides of his tongue with the sides of his teeth. Tell him to force air by squeezing it out over the tongue without using his voice. Have him place his hand on his throat to feel the absence of vibration from his “*speech motor*” because it is off. The most common substitution for this sound is the **TH** so he will have to work to move his tongue back into his mouth. Here is a little story you can share with the child to help him visualize what his tongue needs to do: Tell him that he is a snake trainer and his job is to keep his snake (*his tongue*) inside of his cage (*his teeth*). He must close the cage and this makes his snake very mad so his snake hisses by making an **S** sound. Every time you see the child protrude his tongue forward with a **TH** sound you simply remind him to close

S

The “Snake Sound”

the cage because the snake got out. The child will want to close his mouth tight for every sound so remind him that he is a snake trainer so he must train the snake to stay inside of his cage even if the cage is open sometimes. This way he will begin to open his mouth for the other sounds he needs to produce. Another good way to teach a correct S sound is to work from a T sound to the S sound by having the child begin with the T and then holding that position with his mouth while blowing air across the tip of his tongue until it transforms into a S sound.

SH

The “Tornado Sound”

Tell the child to place his tongue tip on the center ridge behind his front teeth and blow air over the tip of his tongue like a tornado. The tornado needs a tunnel to go through so have the child form a tunnel for the tornado with his lips by protruding them out. He does not use voice with this sound. Have him place his hand by his mouth to feel the air from the tornado coming out. Another trick in getting a child to produce this sound correctly is to have him imagine letting the air out of tires. Have him begin by letting only a little bit of air out of a tire using an **S** sound and then more and more air out of the tire as he moves his mouth to an **SH** sound until a large amount of air comes out of the tire.

T

The “Tick-Tock Sound”

Tell the child to lift his tongue tip to the upper gum ridge just behind his two front teeth. The sides of his tongue should touch the sides of his teeth so that the air stream is blocked. He should open his mouth slightly creating a small explosion when his tongue is released. Do not use voice. The most common error with this sound is its confusion with the **K** sound. Children must learn that this sound is made at the front of the mouth, rather than at the rear. Remind the child of the “front” sound **T** and the “back” sound **K**. If there is difficulty have the child begin his **T** sound with his teeth together. Have him practice the “tick-tock” sound by making the **T** sound in repetition just like a clock.

Voiceless TH

The “Cooling Tongue Sound”

Tell the child to place the front of his tongue between his upper and lower front teeth with his mouth slightly open. Tell him to imagine his tongue is hot and he needs to cool his tongue off by blowing air on it. Do not use voice. Have him place his hand on his throat to feel the absence of the vibration. Both **T** and **F** are common substitutions for this sound. Have the child make a “jack-o-lantern” face by smiling broadly. This will keep his lips stationary and lessen his ability to use a **F** sound.

Voiced TH

The “Buzzer Sound”

Tell the child to place the front of his tongue between his upper and lower front teeth with his mouth slightly open. Tell him to imagine trying to turn on a buzzer between his teeth. He must use voice with this sound and turn on his “speech motor”. Have him place his hand on his throat to feel the vibration from his “speech motor”. Have him practice turning on and off his “speech motor” by saying a **voiceless TH** sound and then a **voiced TH** sound.

V

The “Airplane Sound”

Tell the child to place his front teeth on his lower lip and force an air stream between them. He must use his voice so his “*speech motor*” is on. When he does this, it will sound like an airplane motor. The most common substitution for this sound is **B** so make sure you establish the feeling of “*teeth against lip*” instead of “*lip against lip*”. Have the child grin broadly while making the sound to gain control of the upper lip. The direction of the air needs to be established. Hold the back of the child’s hand before your mouth as you make the sound. Let him feel the air. Then have him hold his hand to his own mouth. A mirror is very useful also.

X

The “Hissing Sound”

Tell the child to close his mouth and hold his tongue still at the back of his mouth. Tell the child to let out a puff of air and to push that air through his mouth to make a hissing sound. Have the child make a **K** sound and then move to an **S** sound. Have him start out slowly repeating the **K** and **S** sound together and then ask him to increase his speed until he is making an **X** sound.

W

The “Crybaby Sound”

This sound can be practiced with the “*uh*” sound at the end of it. Tell the child to place his lips in the “*oo*” position and then to relax his lips as he moves to the “*uh*” position. He will sound like a baby crying. Use voice. This sound is usually omitted altogether. The use of a mirror is helpful. Have him imagine that he has fish lips in order to get his lips to protrude. Place a thin straw in between his lips and have him start saying the **W** sound as you pull the straw slowly from his mouth. If a child is substituting the **L** for this sound tell him that some jobs are for his tongue (**L**) and some jobs are for his lips (**W**) and have him practice putting the right articulator to work by saying **L** words and **W** words.

Y

The “Yes Sound”

This sound needs to be practiced with the “*uh*” sound. Have the child begin by placing his mouth in the “*ee*” position and use his voice. Encourage the child to smile broadly during this sound to keep his mouth in the correct position. A mirror is helpful.

Z

The “Buzzing Bee Sound”

Tell the child he is going to be a buzzing bee. Have him place the tip of his tongue on the ridge directly behind his upper front teeth. He should touch the sides of his tongue with the sides of his teeth. Tell the child to force air over the center of his tongue using voice. Often a child can work from the **D** to the **Z** by beginning with the **D** and then holding the position while blowing air across the tip of the tongue. Have the child feel the difference of turning his “*speech motor*” on and off by placing his hand on his throat and saying an **S** and **Z** sound.