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Information for Parents and Carers

Helping your Child with Unclear Speech Speech and Language Therapy

Children take time to develop their speech sounds. Some children have difficulty learning to notice and use the correct speech sounds in words and sentences. For example, they may say "tat" for cat, "dock" for sock, "boon" for spoon. This would be ok for young children.

Your child is not being lazy. They are usually doing their best.

See Development of Speech Sounds on our website:

<http://www.sltgwentabhb.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1062/Guide%20for%20Parents.pdf>

Here are some general ideas we hope may be useful before your child sees a Speech and Language Therapist. Therapy is most effective when we can work in partnership with parents/carers.

Don't make your child repeat words



Instead, repeat what the child has said but say it correctly. For example, if your child says "I want my big tar!" – you could say "big car". Make the "c" a little louder than the other sounds. Remember at this point your child may not be able to say it correctly, so your aim is for your child just to hear how it should be said.

Encourage gesture and pointing

Let your child take you to the item or point to it. If it is not within the room, show them that it is alright to gesture with their hands. Use a drinking action to ask for a drink; use a train action to request a toy train. In everyday situations try to make gestures yourself as you say words such as a driving action when going to the car. This will give your child the idea.

Narrow down the topic your child is talking about

For example, "Are you telling me about something on the telly?" Or "Are you telling me about something that happened in school?"

Build self esteem

If you have understood part of your child's conversation, repeat it back. This will show them that they have been understood and may encourage them to say more. Give praise for other things they do well, such as listening and trying.

Help your child use other ways to clarify their message

Say "Show me..." and encourage your child to lead you to the item/activity. Encourage the use of gesture and pointing.

Talk a bit slower

Avoid using rushed speech so that your child has a chance to notice the sounds in the words. Remember that **what** your child says (the content) is more important than **how** they say it. Aim for your child to feel that they are talking well and enjoying their conversations.

Finally, **check that your child is hearing well.** Ask your Health Visitor, GP or School Nurse about a hearing test if you are concerned.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/>

<http://www.afasic.org.uk/download/32/>
(Open the download titled improving the making of sounds)

<http://www.sltgwentabhb.wales.nhs.uk>



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