

Speech Sound Programme

This programme is organised into a series of stages aimed at gradually building up the child's use of a target sound (e.g. 'l' for lion) from being able to use the sound on its own to being able to use the sound in their everyday talking. The child's target sound will be specified by the Speech and Language Therapist. Work on the sound by supporting the child to progress through the stages below. There are suggested activities within each stage to help you to keep the practise fun and motivating. You could also use the 'Speech Sound Reward Games' for further ideas. You should only move on to the next stage of the programme when the child is consistently successful at the stage you are working on. 90% accuracy is a good sign that the child is ready to move on to the next stage.

Stage 1: listening for the target sound

- In front of the child place a cue picture for their target sound (e.g. the Jolly Phonics lolly picture for 'l') and a cue picture for the error sound, which is the sound they are currently making in place of the target sound (e.g. if the child is saying 'weg' instead of 'leg' this could be the Jolly Phonics picture for 'w').
- Teach the child the sounds, not letter names, represented by each picture, i.e. teach 'l' and not 'elle'.
- Make the sounds at random, each time asking the child to point to the cue picture for the sound they hear. You could also try this activity where you make the sounds and a puppet or doll 'points' to the picture for the sound they hear. Occasionally make the puppet/doll get it wrong so that the child can correct it. Repeat this activity a number of times until you are sure that the child can consistently hear the difference between the two sounds.
- Now that the child can hear the difference between the two sounds at single sound level try the same activity but this time put a vowel at the end of the sounds, e.g. 'lah', 'woo', 'wah' etc. Again, ask the child to point to the picture for the sound they hear.
- Next try the same activity but use a selection of words, some that start with the target sound and some that start with the error sound. Read the words out at random and ask the child to point to the picture for the sound they hear at the beginning of each word. You could also complete this activity using minimal pairs (a minimal pair is a pair of words that only differ by one sound, e.g. 'light' and 'white').



Stage 2: learning to say the target sound

- Remember to repeat the listening activity at this level before going on to making the sound.
- Remove the cue picture for the child's error sound.
- Now ask the child to make the target sound. You may need to explain to the child how to make the sound; please discuss this with your Speech and Language Therapist if there are any difficulties. It may be helpful to practise the sound in front of a mirror as this will give the child useful visual feedback about how to make it.

You can practise saying the sound using a range of activities. These could include:

- Posting – have lots of small cue pictures for the target sound. For each try at the target sound, the child posts a picture into a post box.
- Leapfrog – draw and cut out some lily pads. Ask the child to be the frog jumping from lily pad to lily pad. Ask the child to make the target sound before each jump.
- Ball Games – roll the ball to each other. Each time ask the child to make the target sound.
- Fishing – place several cue pictures for the target sound on toy fish (you can draw/cut out fish if necessary). Ask the child to 'fish for a sound'. The child says the sound when they catch a fish.

Stage 3: saying the target sound before a vowel (e.g. ah, ee, oo)

- You will need the cue picture for the target sound along with pictures that represent a range of vowel sounds, e.g. the Jolly Phonics pictures for 'ah', 'ee', 'or', 'ay' and 'au'.
- Remember to repeat the listening activity at this level before going on to making the sound
- Begin by practising the consonant vowel (CV) combination with a small gap in between the target sound and the vowel, for example 'l.....ah'.
- When the child does this easily, encourage them to reduce the gap between the target sound and the vowel until the sounds are blended together, e.g. 'lah'.

You can practise saying the target sound before a vowel using a range of activities. These could include:

- Fishing – add the vowel sounds to the fish. Ask the child to 'fish for a sound'. Support them to blend the target sound with the vowel sound that they catch.
- Reward games, e.g. in Pop up Pirate the child could be given a sword for each try at saying their target sound with a vowel.



Stage 4: saying the target sound at the beginning of a word (e.g. 'leg', 'lion')

- Keep the cue picture for the target sound in front of the child during the activities as a reminder.
- To begin with you may need to model each word first then ask the child to repeat it back before the child is able to say the word accurately on their own.

You can practise saying the target sound at the beginning of a word using a range of activities. These could include:

- Colour and cut out pictures that begin with the target sound and use them to play games such as pairs, snap or Lotto.
- Remember to repeat the listening activity at this level before going on to making the sound
 - Collect objects that begin with the target sound and place them in a bag. Ask the child to 'feel' in the bag for an object and name it.
 - Hide pictures that begin with the target sound around the room. When the child finds each picture they name it, remembering to use their target sound. You could also do this with objects.
 - Give the child clues about the word/object and see if they can guess what it is, for example "it lives in a zoo, it says roar, what is it? ...It's a lion".

Stage 5: saying the target sound in a short phrase

- Now the child is able to say the target sound at word level they need to practise putting these words into short phrases. A phrase consists of the word beginning with the target sound and one other word.
- An example of a phrase might be 'red lolly' or 'lizard sleeping'. You could also use a short carrier phrase to practise at this level, e.g. 'I've got the (insert target word)'.

You can practise saying the target sound in a short phrase using a range of activities. These could include:

- Use the pictures from Stage 4. This time on their turn ask the child to make up a phrase for the picture they select. You may need to model some phrases so the child understands the activity.
- Choose a picture from Stage 4 and ask the child to draw a big/red (etc) leg/lion (etc). Then reverse roles so the child is giving you the instructions.
- Look through catalogues/picture booklets and find items beginning with the target sound then describe them, e.g. 'brown lion', 'Lego set' etc.



Stage 6: saying the target sound in a sentence

- The aim of this stage is for the child to practise putting the words starting with their target sound into sentences. Before the child is able to spontaneously say the sentences correctly you may need to model examples first.

You can practise saying the target sound in a sentence using a range of activities. These could include:

- Use the pictures from Stage 4. This time on their turn support the child to make up a sentence for the picture they select. Use cueing questions if the child struggles to generate a sentence, e.g. What does it do? Where do you find it?
- Choose a picture from Stage 4 and ask the child to draw the object in a scene for example a lion in the zoo. Then ask the child to make up a sentence about the picture they have drawn.
- Look through catalogues/picture booklets and find items beginning with the target sound then describe them using a sentence, e.g. 'I saw a lion at the zoo'.

Stage 7: remembering to use the target sound in structured conversation

- The aim of this stage is to give the child an opportunity to concentrate on their sound for a short period of time during a conversation.

You can practise saying the target sound in structured conversation using a range of activities. These could include:

- Tell the child 'I want you to really concentrate on your target sound for 5 minutes'. You might want to have the cue picture for the target sound on the table in front of the child to remind them to think about this sound during the conversation.
- Use pictures cards or a storybook as the basis of a short conversation. Try to include the target sound as much as possible. Give the child the chance to self-correct if the incorrect sound is used during the conversation. If they do not self-correct then give support for them to correct the error, e.g. point to the cue picture for the target sound, model their error back to them and/or model the correct production of the word.



Stage 8: remembering to use the target sound in spontaneous conversation

- By this stage the child should be using their sound correctly during most conversations. However it can take some time and practise before the sound is used consistently. To help the child do this you must consistently model the correct production of the target sound/word if they say it incorrectly and give support for them to correct any errors.

