Exercises for Mouth Movements

These activities are a fun way to encourage a child to use their lips and tongue.

Before You Start…
- Make sure the child is sitting up straight in a supportive chair.
- If the child’s voice gets ‘bubbly’ ask them to swallow the saliva away.
- Place a mirror in front of the child so they can clearly see themselves and you.

1) Lip & Blowing exercises

These aim to improve lip rounding, lip protrusion and control of the flow of air out of the mouth.

- Make different shapes with your lips in front of a mirror and encourage the child to copy you, for example, “oo” “ah” “ee” “mm”
- Push your lips forwards into a round shape to make the sound ‘oo’, then stretch your lips into a smile to say ‘ee’ e.g. ‘oo-ee’ ‘oo-ee’
- Blow pieces of tissue, feathers or ping pong balls – try with a straw too!
- Puff out your cheeks and try to keep the air in by keeping your lips closed – see if the child can copy you!
- Give kisses to each other and to teddy/dolly!
- Blow bubbles through a straw into water
- Close your lips and keep them together for the count of 5
- Practise sounds made with lips together – ‘ppppp’ ‘bbbb’ ‘mmmm’. Then try sounds where lips open quickly – ‘pa’ ‘ba’ ‘ma’
- Use whistles or blowing toys with rounded mouth pieces to encourage lip rounding – and blow to make a noise. Make sure the toys are held with lips not the teeth!
2) Tongue Exercises

Useful tongue movements include sticking the tongue out, licking things, lifting tongue tip up, lowering tongue tip down and moving tongue sideways. Try the following ideas:

- Practise copying the suggested tongue movements in front of the mirror
- Open mouth wide and touch the roof of your mouth with the tip of your tongue
- Move your tongue from side to side
- Licking ice creams and lollies
- Stick your tongue out and point the tip to the roof and the floor
- Practise licking around the lips
- Put motivating food like jam on the child’s top lip, chin and sides of the mouth for them to lick off
- Put food on a spoon, or lollipop stick and hold it so the child has to make the tongue movements (up, down, to the side) to taste the food. Gradually move the spoon/lolly stick further away
3) Soft Palate Exercises

These exercises aim to help children with the movement of their soft palate.

Get the child to look at their mouth movement in a mirror as they repeat the ‘ah’ sound. They should notice the soft palate moving up and down.

Alternate between a vowel sound and nasal sounds- m, n, ng (ng as in going) e.g. m-ah-m-ah, oo-n-oo-n, ee-ng-ee-ng

Alternate between sounds made in the nose and sounds made in the mouth e.g. m-b-m-b, ng-ng-g-ng-g or n-d-n-d-n-d