

# Helping children with unclear speech

To make speech sounds properly, your child need to hear the sounds, be able to move the muscles of their mouth and listen to check the sounds they are making are right. It is often difficult for children to do this and your child may find it frustrating when people cannot understand them.



## How to help your child with unclear speech

### DO :

- Listen to **WHAT** your child says and **NOT** how they say it.
- **Repeat back** the 'adult version' of the words your child says, so they hear good examples
- **Spend time talking to your child** so you get used to their speech and they get lots of opportunities to chat (maybe think about having 'Special Time')
- Encourage your child to **point to, show you or act out things** that you do not understand to help them get their message across.
- **Be realistic** about how clear your child's speech should be — by the age of 3 your child's speech will probably be understood by familiar adults but it will not be perfect.

Children's  
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### DON'T :

- **'Correct'** your child's speech by saying eg "No, it's a car, not a tar!"
- **'Ask your child to say the words again'**
- **Pretend to understand.** Instead, ask your child to show you, point to it or 'mime' it.

# Games and activities to help your child learn speech sounds

In everyday speech, we often talk quickly and words can merge into one another. When working on speech sounds, use just one word at a time to name things, so that your child can hear the sounds in words more clearly. If you have a longer word -e.g. elephant - you can also break the word down into parts (syllables) - e.g.. 'e' - 'le' - 'phant'. This helps your child hear the sounds more clearly.

## Using everyday situations:

To help your child:

- Name items as you shop or at meal times
- Say what can you see out of the car window or as you walk
- Name clothes as you sort the washing or as your child is getting dressed
- Count buttons as you do them up or stairs as you climb them
- Name body parts in the bath
- Name toys as you tidy up



## Play games together with your child

Play some of these games with your child, naming the pictures as you play:

- Snap, pairs, dominoes or lotto (with pictures)
- Memory games, where your child has to notice a missing object from a tray of 3 or 4 items.

## Look at picture books with your child

Look at picture books and get your child to point at the pictures which they want you to name. Point to and name things in the book using just one word.