

Especially for preschoolers with disabilities

Sounds Good to Me

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Young children enjoy making sounds with their voices, whether they are saying words or just making sounds for fun. Sometimes, preschoolers with disabilities need help to make sounds and words. If your preschooler has a hard time making words loud enough to hear, this guide will show how to help him talk louder.

What is the practice?

The practice is to help your preschool child make words that he and others can hear. Making and hearing words helps preschool children learn to say and repeat the words that they hear around them.

What does the practice look like?

Some preschool children with disabilities cannot make words loud enough to be heard. Using simple things that make words louder can help a child hear herself and be heard by others. These machines are often made for young children and can be found in many stores. They include microphones, speech amplifiers, computer games that increase sound, and home karaoke machines.

How do you do the practice?

Here are some ways that you can help your child make words that she and others can hear:

- Choose a machine that you think your child will enjoy using. Some children like talking into tape recorders and playing their words back on high volume. Other children have fun talking into microphones on home-karaoke machines and hearing their words coming from the TV.
- Pick a quiet place so your child will not be distracted while making words. Show her how to use the machine to make words that can be heard. Have her say words she already knows into the machine. Make a game of it; take turns saying a word and then have your preschooler say a word. Preschoolers enjoy rhyme play, so use songs with rhyming sounds and take turns saying each line with your child.
- Record words your child says and play the words back so she can hear herself. It may help her to hear if she wears headphones while listening to the words. By hearing her own words, your preschooler will likely be excited and want to say more words.
- Find recorded nursery rhymes or stories that your child likes and encourage her to “talk” along with the recording. If it has words she already says, she may try to say some new ones, too. Computer games or “sing along” DVDs that show favorite characters as they play may get your child to say words.
- Use players that play your child’s favorite music or video when she talks with a microphone. When your preschooler likes the music or video, she is likely to repeat the words. Songs like “Wheels on the Bus” encourage preschoolers to say words and make sound effects. Singing is a fun way to help children be confident in saying words out loud.
- Play with sounds using empty paper towel rolls or homemade or purchased megaphones to amplify your voices.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your preschooler try to say more words?
- Does your child enjoy playing sound games?
- Is your child making words that others can hear?



Take a look at more fun with rhymes and sounds

I Hear Myself Singing!

Leesa has trouble saying words loud enough to hear. She has become shy about trying to speak to others. Leesa loves to listen to music and play dress-up as a princess. Her mother bought a children's karaoke machine with princess characters on it and set it up. Leesa happily watched the princess videos on the television as the music played. Her mother showed her how to say words into the microphone. Leesa danced around excitedly when she heard her voice come through the television speakers. She spent the rest of the afternoon saying different words and "singing" along with the princesses in the video. She couldn't wait to perform for the rest of the family when they came home later that day.



Crank It Up!

It is a challenge for Sam to put enough energy into making his voice loud enough to hear. Sam is an active child with lots of imagination. His father bought him a voice recorder that's small enough for him to easily hold. Sam can record his voice and play it back with the volume on "high." Now others can hear what he says. Sam plays with his cars on the living room rug with his brother. He records noises for the cars. "Vrooommm," "Beep, Beep," "Mmmm." Sam plays the sounds and words on high volume so his brother can hear them as they roll the cars along. Sam adds new sound effects as he goes.

"Hi, Daddy!"

David watches his mother talk to his Dad through the microphone on the computer. Mom notices his curiosity and pulls David onto her lap in front of the computer. "Daddy is away on his business trip," she tells David. "He is far away, but he can hear me when I talk to him with this microphone. I can hear him talk to me, too. Why don't you say something to Daddy?" David shyly puts his mouth right next to the microphone. He says the word "Hi." "Well, hi, David!" exclaims his dad. David is happily surprised to hear his dad's voice through the computer speakers. He leans toward the microphone again. He is more confident this time. He says, "Hi, Daddy!" His dad tells David how happy he is to get to hear him and talk with him.

