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Fun activities that'll improve your child's speech

Try these engaging home exercises with junior if you're worried about their ability to speak properly!

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If you are concerned about your [child's ability](#) to [communicate](#), you'll probably want to work on his or her [speaking skills](#) and [social skills](#) at home.

Do try to make these [home sessions as fun](#) as possible. Remember, if you are bored doing the same old activities all the time, there's a good chance your child is also bored. Worse, if boredom has set in, your child won't perform as well as they should!

In this article about fun speech therapy activities families can try, I offer great ideas [you and your child will enjoy](#) at home.

#1. Do oral motor exercises

Most parents aren't aware that the muscles children [use for speaking](#) are often underdeveloped. A [speech therapist](#) might even have pointed this out about your [preschooler](#). Not to worry, however, as this issue can be fixed.

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“When your child licks a [popsicle](#) — up and down, diagonally or side to side — with their tongue, this helps them to develop their tongue’s range of movement.”

Help your child strengthen the muscles in their mouth, tongue and their lips with these enjoyable home exercises:

* Drinking through a straw: Sucking up a thickened liquid like a purée or smoothie through a wider straw helps to train the tongue to retract and boosts lip-rounding skills.

* [Blowing bubbles](#): As kids love [blowing bubbles](#), this is a fun way to build up lip and cheek muscle dissociation (the ability to move these muscles independently of each other) and control.

* Licking a frozen fruit popsicle: When your child licks a [popsicle](#) — up and down, diagonally or side to side — with their tongue, this helps them to develop their tongue’s range of movement.

* Pulling funny faces: Looking into a mirror and making funny faces such as puffing their cheeks helps to strengthen their facial muscles!

Such tasks won’t just help the muscles function correctly when they eat, these may even improve the clarity of their speech clarity and help children with low muscle enunciate better.

#2. Add some movement to your sessions!

Just like adults, [children love being active!](#) Moving is fun and you have lots of great ways to incorporate some movement into your home speech therapy sessions. And when your child enjoys the lessons, he/she will probably [work harder to achieve their goals](#).

Also, when children move their bodies when practising or [learning new skills](#), they have a better shot at succeeding.

Try these fun ways to include movement in your home sessions:

* Have fun with yoga: [Yoga poses](#) can offer an element of fun while your offspring practises speech and language skills.

* [Play outside](#): Lie on the grass together while you work — your child will love the personal interaction. Playing hopscotch, jumping or keeping their balance on a balance beam are other fun ways your child can [enjoy the outdoors](#) while learning. [Sight word hopscotch](#) is an easy outdoor activity to practise recognising [numbers](#), letters, colours and [spelling](#). All you need is some chalk and a healthy imagination.

* Offer fun as a reward: For instance, reward your little one with a game of, say, basketball after he/she has practised a skill correctly for five or 10 minutes,.



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#3. Play skills-building games with them

[Playing with your child](#) has many benefits such as [building motor skills](#), forming [a strong emotional bond](#) and teaching your little one [life skills](#). [Playing with your youngster](#) helps them [build confidence](#) without the pressure for them to talk.

You can play many games at home — anything from pulling funny faces to reciting tongue twisters can help your youngster develop their speech skills.

Other fun and fantastic games that will boost speech and language skills include:

* Spotting the item that doesn't belong: Either list a number of items or use small items and ask your child to identify the one that doesn't belong. For instance, you can set out a row of plastic animals such as a lion, giraffe, monkey and elephant together with another item that doesn't fit, like a toy car. Then ask your child to name them all and hand you the one that doesn't fit, that is, the toy car.

* Getting them to tell stories: Ask your child to tell you his/her favourite story or ask them to recount a [fun family outing](#) to you. Use family photos as a visual aid to prompt him/her.

["Playing with your child has many benefits such as building motor skills, forming a strong emotional bond and teaching your little one life skills."](#)

* Playing the *Guess Who or What* game: Ask your youngster to figure out what or whom you are thinking of by getting him/her to ask various questions. You can also offer answers as clues to guide them to the correct answer. For instance, your kid might ask, "Can we eat it?" or "Is it a person?" You will then reply with a "Yes" or "No" or even "No, it's a pet".

* Organising a sound treasure hunt: Great fun and a wonderful way to practise sound recognition. Give your child a box and ask them to find objects around your house that all start with the same sound, for instance, the "sh" sound. Your youngster then starts looking for anything from a small shoe, a sheep, to shells etc.

#4. Sing songs and recite nursery rhymes

Singing songs and [reciting nursery rhymes](#) with your child is a fantastic way to help them learn about the different aspects of oral language. Practising rhymes and rhythms should inspire more fluent speech.

Make sure to seize learning opportunities

You'll be surprised at how many speech development and learning opportunities present themselves in our daily lives. Why not fit in some fun speech therapy activities into your day or try sparking a conversation with your child while you carry out your everyday routines?

Also, remember that each and every child needs [some form of motivation for working towards a particular goal](#). While some children are motivated by accomplishment, others might need a more material type of motivation. This could be in the form of a toy, a treat or even some time off from working on their speech skills.

Do take note of the following to make sure your fun speech activities have a purpose:

- * Track your child's progress and [encourage them](#) to work toward a goal.
- * Decide how to [reward your child](#) after they meet a specific goal.
- * Set clear limits for these [learning sessions](#) to make sure your child can keep up.
- * [Stay positive](#) and always end on a good note.

There you have it — do have some fun while you're teaching your child these important skills!

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