

Articulation (speech)

Do's and Don'ts for Parents

1. Don't let children know when you are worried about their way of talking.
2. Listen to your children. Concentrate on WHAT they are saying, not HOW they are saying it.
3. Provide a good speech model for your children to imitate. Use clear pronunciation without exaggerating.
4. When children say words incorrectly, instead of pressuring them to produce sounds correctly or say them over and over, direct your energy toward saying them naturally by "expanding" and "restating" what the child said. For example:

- Child says: "moak"for" milk".
- Parent says: Oh, you want more milk?
I'll get the milk for you.
The milk is very cold.

The child now has heard the word "milk" three times (and may need to hear it several HUNDRED times before learning to produce it correctly). The parent's job is to TEACH, not to test.

5. Remember YOUR repetition of the word is important and necessary. DON'T require or expect your child to repeat words, however.
6. Try to have children look, watch, and listen to you when you are repeating or expanding. Don't try to force them to look at you—just be sure you are ON THEIR VISUAL LEVEL.
7. Encourage and praise children, particularly when they attempt to say a difficult word and change their production to resemble yours more closely.
8. If your children mention or demonstrate frustration concerning their inability to speak correctly, reassure them that everyone finds it difficult to talk at times.
9. If you are concerned about your child's sound errors consult a speech and language specialist for advice. Ninety percent of all native English speaking children should be able to correctly produce the sounds displayed on the table below by the ages indicated. Children who cannot do this should be considered for possible referral for a speech evaluation.