

# **Supporting Your Child's Communication Skills**

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# Introduction



- I have worked as an SLP for 10 years now.
- I started off working in Calgary and have been working in private practice since I moved to Ottawa in 2017.
- I started my own practice in 2019 (**A+ Communication Speech and Language Services**).
- I have always loved helping kids and I am super passionate about what I do!
- Certifications: Hanen (It Takes Two, Target Words, More than Words), Lidcombe, ...
- Service families all over Ottawa - in their homes, daycares, preschools, private schools and online.
  - I love working in their environments
    - See what the ins and out of their days are like
    - Incorporate strategies into their routines
    - Troubleshoot with teachers, parents, caregivers, ...



# Why am I here?

To help you support your child's  
speech and language development





# Why is this important?

According to [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org) (and as has been very evident in my practice),

**There has been a dramatic increase in the number of young children who present with social development or language delays in the last 5 years.**



# Reasons for this increase

## Our pandemic babies are starting JK this year

- lack of stimulation in early years (library story time, playgrounds, Early ON groups, playdates)
- limited social interactions (other than immediate family for some time)
  - family can anticipate needs
  - do not get to build confidence speaking with others
  - less peer interactions
  - more screentime
- different models —> due to masks, no lip reading
- isolation, stress, trauma in the family that occur with a pandemic



# Early Intervention is Key

Speech/language difficulties can result in a number of challenges if not addressed early enough

- **Literacy difficulties** —> language development is highly predictive of grade 3 reading levels
- **Social challenges** —> bullying or isolation
- **Emotional challenges** —> decreased self esteem - confidence and skills to interact socially
- **Being labeled** —> can be misjudged as less intelligent/capable





# Let's talk milestones

## Speech vs Language

- Speech- articulation, speech sounds, intelligibility, clarity, ...
- Language
  - Expressive (use)
  - Receptive (understanding)
  - Social-language (interaction)



# Let's talk milestones

## Expressive Language (5 year olds)

- Minimum of 5-8 words/sentence
- Appropriate use of pronouns (my/your, his/her, myself, herself/himself)
- Appropriate use of different verb tenses (past vs future)
- Uses prepositions (behind, beside) and plurals appropriately
- Asks questions with proper auxiliary placement (what do you, what does)
- Tells a story accurately



# Let's talk milestones

## Receptive Language (5 year olds)

- Understands variety of concepts
  - First, next, last, between, above, below
- Understands complex directions with multiple concepts and steps
- Can respond appropriately to “when” and “what would happen if” questions
- Understands opposites (yesterday vs tomorrow, before vs after)



# Let's talk milestones

## Articulation (5 year olds)

- Unfamiliar adults should understand 90% of what is said
- Should have all sounds except /r/ and /th/ in spontaneous speech



# Let's talk milestones

## Social Language (5 year olds)

- Gains peers' attention in appropriate ways
- Stays on topic
- Can keep a conversation going, taking appropriate turns
- Shows concern when others are upset
- Behaves appropriately in social settings
  - Keeps quiet when someone else is talking
  - Does not get hyper focused on unusual items/ideas





# What can I do?

## Read with your child!!!

- It is a fact that **reading to your child will directly impact their future language skills and academic success**
- Target so many different areas
  - Expressive —> New vocabulary, concepts and complex sentence structures
  - Receptive —> Ask them questions about what happened (understanding of wh- words)
  - Clarity —> Have your child describe pictures TO YOU
    - Fill in missing words, break up tricky words, emphasize difficult sounds, ...



# What can I do?

## Pronunciation Concerns

- Focus on modelling and emphasizing correct productions (rather than constantly correcting their mistakes)
- Clap out longer words, emphasizing the syllable they missed (e.g. BAnana)
- Use visual cues
  - /f/ —> bite lip and point to your mouth
  - Consonant blends —> finger down arm, tap at end

# What can I do?

## Expressive Language Concerns

- Sequence description - have your child...
  - Recount their day
  - Create / retell a story
- Describe pictured 3-4 sequences (app or printable)
- Describe multistep daily routines
  - Bedtime
  - Making sandwich, ...

FIRST	THEN	LAST

### **\*\*TIPS\*\***

- Ensure clear beginning  
middle and end
- Provide visuals
- Encourage organization  
with “first, then, last” words



# What can I do?

## Receptive Language Concerns

- Have them practice listening for and processing multistep directions
  - “After dinner, put your dishes in the sink, and then go upstairs and get ready for your bath”
  - “Before you clean up your toys, go let out the dog please”
- Ask WH questions about stories
  - What happened in the story? Why was the character sad?
- Prediction, Inference and Feeling questions
  - “What do you think will happen next?”
  - “How do you think she was feeling?”
  - “How do we know the character missed his family?”





# What can I do?

## Expressive and Receptive Language Concerns

- **Barrier Activities**

- Both you and child have a piece of paper with a barrier set up between the two of you.
- Receptive—> Goal is for the child to draw what you are describing without seeing what you are doing
- Expressive—> Child gives you directions to draw the picture they are drawing
  - Child must be specific and use appropriate concepts when describing

- **Games: Guess Who and Headbands**

- Both require specific descriptions and complex receptive language skills in order to play successfully



# What can I do?

## Apps

- **Storybird**
  - **Storytelling app to boost expressive and receptive language**
- **Articulation Station**
  - **For practicing specific speech sounds**
- **Toca Life World: create stories and narrate actions as they interact with characters in the app**
- **Speech Blubs**
  - **Fun, interactive app for young children to work on speech and language skills**

# What can I do?

## Online Resources

- **Speech and Language Kids:** offers resources and activities designed for parents to support speech development at home
- **Mommy Speech Therapy:** specific sounds (work into a game)
  - Matching games
  - Finding words with flashlight in room
  - Before turn in game (pop up pirate, snakes & ladders, simple card game)



# What can I do?

## Reach out for help!

- Contact an SLP and have them evaluated if you have specific concerns
  - First Words / Cheo
  - Private practices: <https://www.firstwords.ca/find-an-slp>



# Questions?

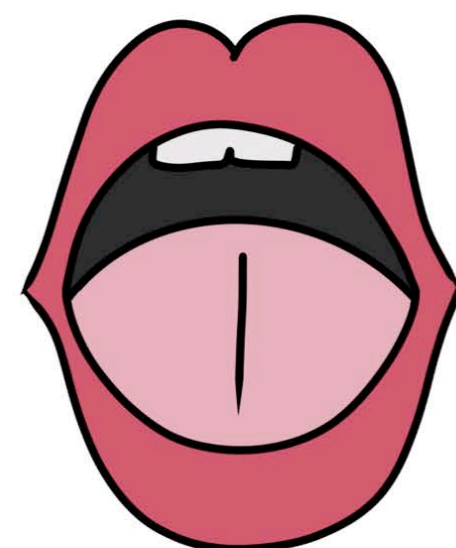




# Teaching AR

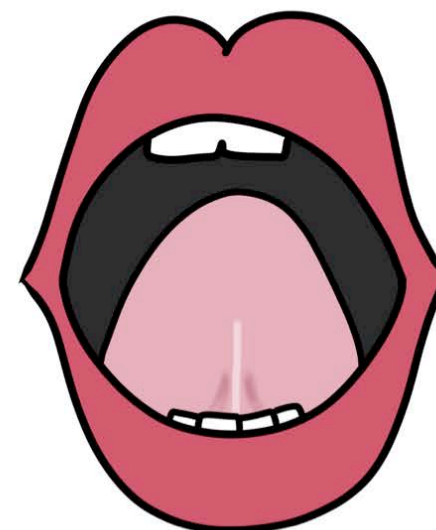
First practice with voice off. Then practice with voice on.

## 1. flat tongue



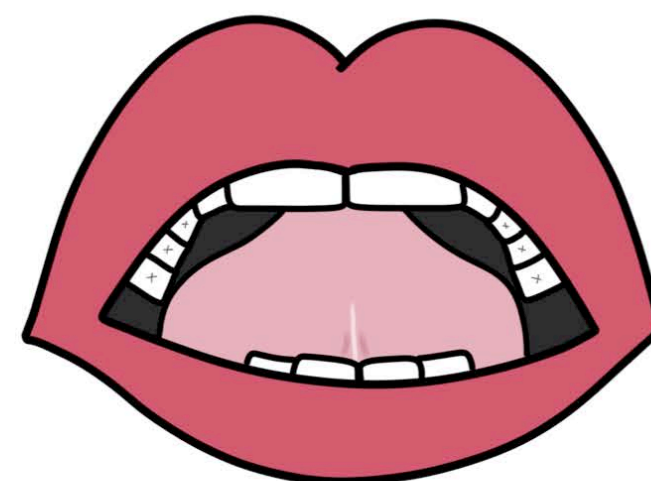
- Say "ahhhh"
- Tongue Flat & Wide: The tip of the tongue should be near the front teeth (no retraction). Keep it wide- no skinny tongues! The edges should be near the molars.
- Big Mouth: keep your jaw nice and wide

## 2. curl slowly



- Half Way: tongue tip should go half way back- don't go too far
- No Touching: don't let the tip touch the roof of your mouth
- Keep it curled!!

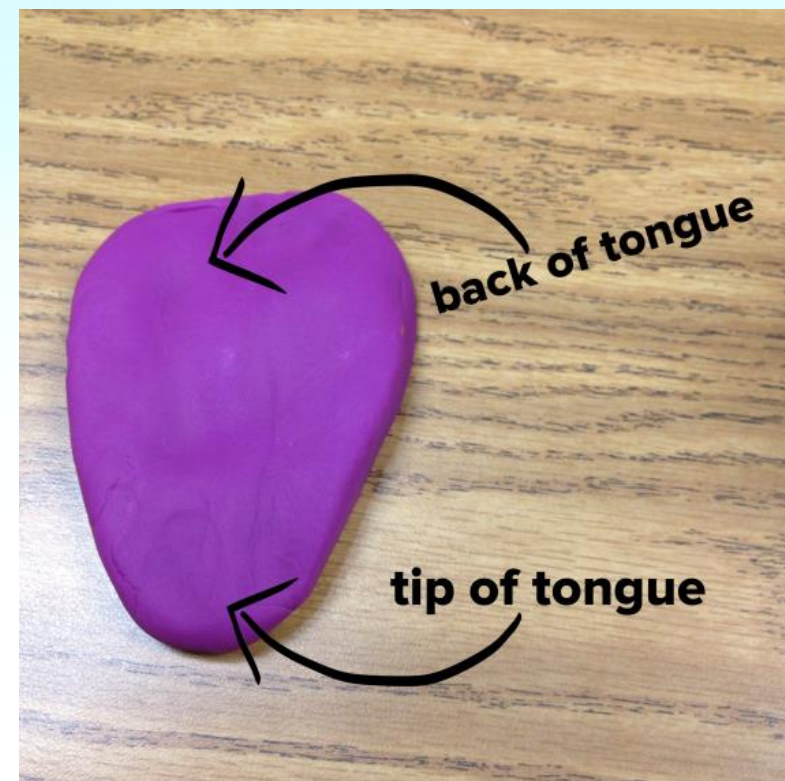
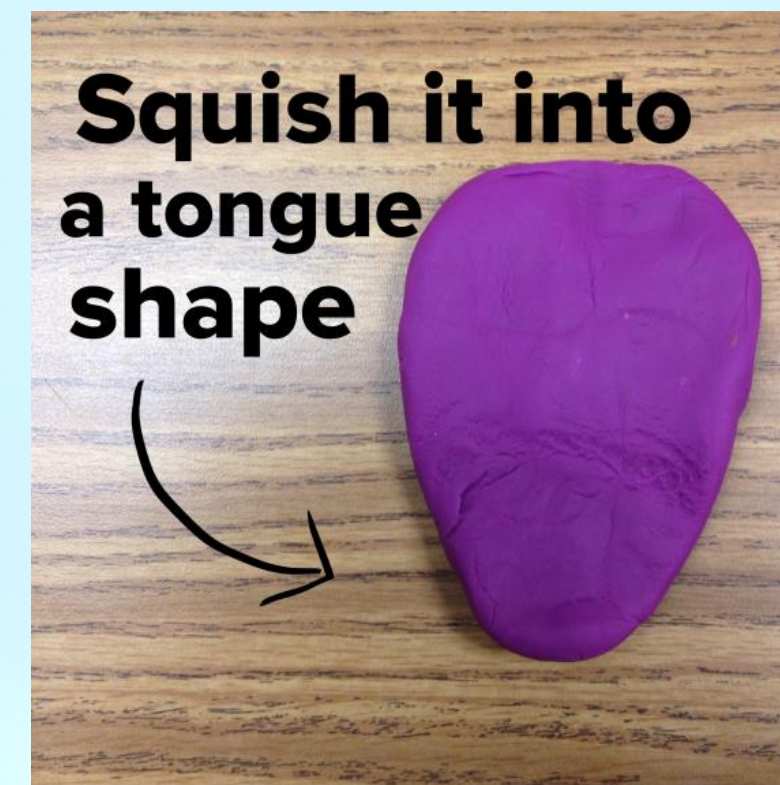
## 3. close jaw a little



- Keep Tongue Curled
- Don't close your mouth all the way and don't let your lips touch yet
- The back of your tongue should be wide and tight



## Play-Doh Tongue Placement: Retroflexed /r/



- Curl your tongue to match your Play-Doh tongue
- Practice making the /r/ sound