

Steps to Successful Speech

When a child is learning to develop the skills needed to produce a speech sound, they might work on this sound in different types of words.

The aim is to build accurate speech production from a single sound level to more complex words containing other sounds and syllables until the child is able to produce the sound accurately in conversation. Your speech and language therapist will help to identify which level your child should be working at with their target sound.

If your child is working on more than one sound, they may be working on different levels for different sounds. The single sound level and vowel sound level are the most simple which are then built on as the child's skills progress.

Please use this guide alongside pictures provided by your child's speech and language therapist to find out more about working at each level. More pictures can be found on our 'speech sound pictures' page. We recommend looking at our handout '[Top tips for working on speech sounds](#)' also available on our 'speech' page.



<u>Page</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Example</u>
11	Connected speech (Generalisation)	'The pirate popped up'
10	Phrases and sentences	'put it here', 'I like popcorn'
9	Consonant cluster words	'play', 'proud', 'spin'
8	Multisyllabic words	'parachute' 'peppermint'
7	CVC words	'pig', 'cap', 'rip'
6	CVCV words	'pepper' 'papa'
3-5	Consonant-vowel (CV) Vowel - consonant (VC)	'pea' 'pie' 'pah' 'up' 'ap' 'op'
2	Single sound	'p'

Single sounds

Before children can use a sound in a word they must be able to produce it easily on its own. You can practice at this level by:

- Use the target 'speech sound' picture you have been given and advice from your child's therapist about how to make the sound.
- Let the child watch & listen to how you make the sound.
- Using a mirror can be helpful
- Let the child have a turn at making the sound
- Give feedback based on their production. Praise **only** when they actually get it right, e.g. 'that was a lovely 's' sound'.
- For incorrect productions, try gentle specific feedback e.g. 'good try but that time I heard ...' or 'I didn't see your lips together that time'.
- Try incorporating games into this practice to motivate your child e.g. 10x attempts at a sound then take a turn with the game.
- Short periods of practice little and often (e.g. 10 minutes a few times a week) are usually more effective than one long practice session.



Read our '[top tips for working on speech sounds](#)' handout also available on our 'speech' page.

Once they can make the sound correctly most of the time they are ready to move to the next stage. The next stage is **consonant vowel** and **vowel consonant (see pages 3-5)**.

Consonant-vowel and vowel-consonant

Your child is working on blending their speech sounds with a vowel.

- ⇒ Place the target 'speech sound' picture on the table, e.g. 'p'
- ⇒ Choose a vowel picture e.g. 'ah'
- ⇒ Place the vowel picture after (on the right of) the picture of the target sound.
- ⇒ Ask the child to listen to you making the sounds together e.g. 'pah'. You can also go the other way e.g. 'ahp'
- ⇒ Now, encourage your child to copy the sounds you make.
- ⇒ Try using our 'Olly the Octopus' picture on the next page to work on blending sounds with your child

What if my child finds this tricky?

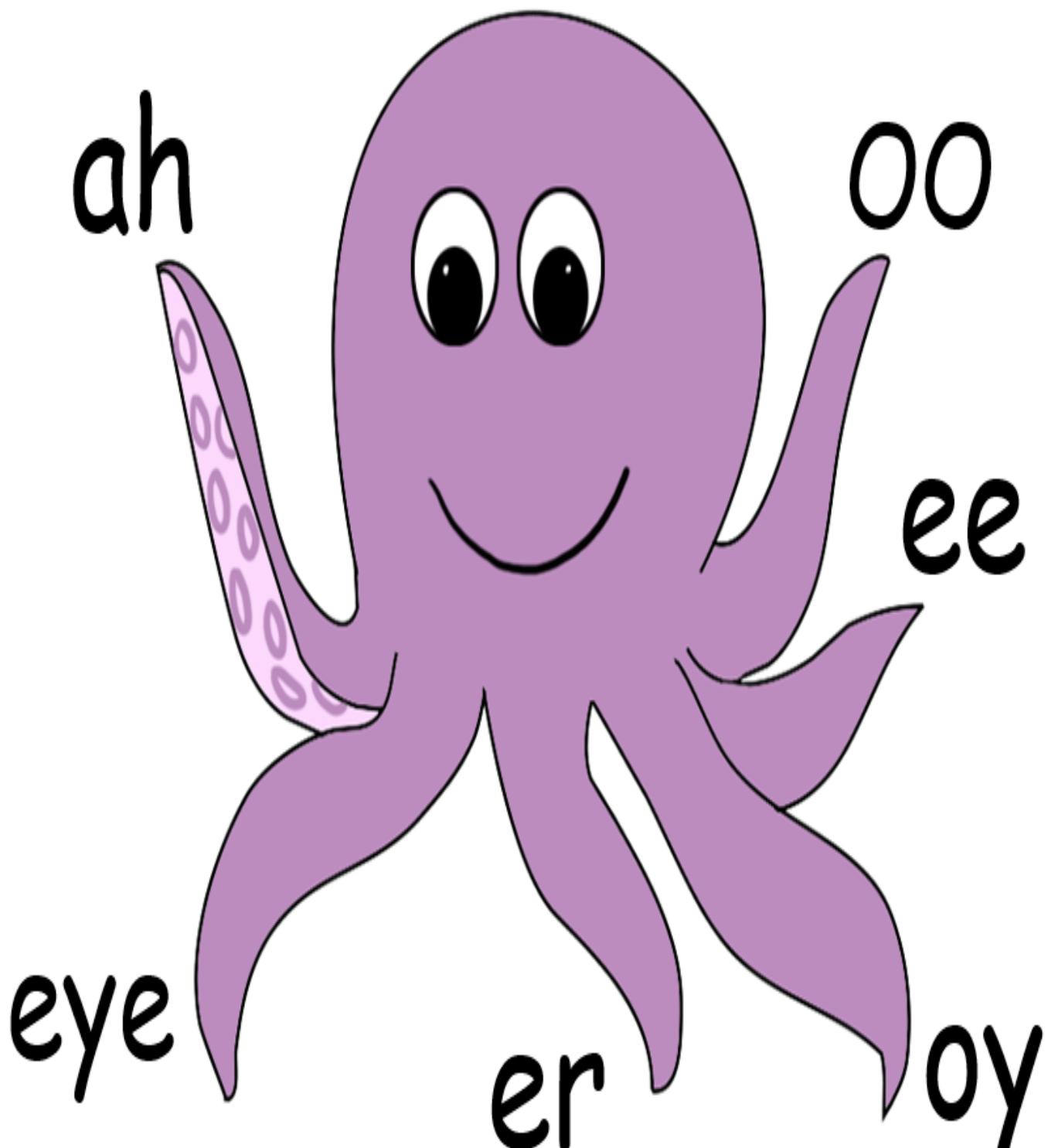
- ⇒ Move the pictures a little way apart and ask them to leave a small gap between the two sounds, e.g. 'p...ah'
- ⇒ Show them how the two sounds come together by moving the 'speech sound' pictures, together. Say the sound as you move them together.
- ⇒ Once they can do this, practise again without a gap. The aim is to blend the target sound with a vowel (to have no gap).
- ⇒ Try focusing on one vowel at a time. Your speech and language therapist can help you to pick which vowels might be easiest to start with.

Olly the Octopus

- 1) If you have been provided with sound cards, stick your child's target sound (e.g. 'p') in the middle of the octopus. You could write a 'p' sound in the middle of the octopus instead if you don't have a sound card.
- 2) Practice blending your target sound with a vowel on each leg of the octopus. Trace your finger along the line and model the correct syllable (slowly) for your child (e.g. /pah/, /poy/, 'per').
- 3) You can practice going from the leg back to the middle (e.g. 'ahp' 'oyp', 'erp'). It is ok at this stage if the words you are saying are not real words.
- 4) Try taking it in turns so that your child can hear how you blend these sounds together.

Top tips

- Make sure to give your child lots of praise for correct productions and give honest feedback if they don't quite get it right e.g. 'that one was brilliant, I heard you make a 'p' and then 'eye' which sounded like 'pie' or 'not quite, you missed your 'p' sound that time, can you try that again?'
- Keep practising in short bursts (e.g. practice each leg 5 times) to help to keep your child motivated. Have a look at our '**top tips for working on speech sounds**' handout for more ideas to help with home practice.



CVCV words

Your child is working on Consonant-vowel Consonant-vowel words (CVCV).

- This might include words with two of the same consonant sounds such as 'baby', 'daddy', 'mummy'. Or this might be words with different consonant sounds e.g. 'coffee', 'dummy'.
- At this stage, your child is working on blending what they did at CV level into longer sequences.
- Use the speech sound pictures you have been given and advice from your child's therapist about how to make the target sounds.
- Let the child watch & listen to how you make the sound.
- Using a mirror may be helpful.
- Let your child have a turn at saying the sequences of sounds.
- You may need to start with a slight gap between the two syllables (e.g. 'for 'baby' start by saying 'bay - 'bee').
- Practice making this sequence faster and blending the two syllables together ('baby').
- Give specific feedback to your child based on how they produced the word.
- For incorrect productions, try gentle specific feedback e.g. 'good try but that time I heard I gap between 'bay' and 'bee', can you make it faster?' or 'I didn't hear your 'b' in 'bee' that time'.
- Try incorporating games into this practice to motivate your child e.g. 5x attempts at a word then take a turn with the game.
- Short periods of practice little and often (e.g. 10 minutes a few times a week) are usually more effective than one long practice session.



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Read our '**Top tips for working on speech sounds**' handout also available on our 'speech' page.

Once they can make the sound correctly most of the time they are ready to move to the next stage. The next stage is **consonant vowel consonant words (see page 7)**.

CVC - Short Words

Before you start, read our [Top tips for working on speech sounds](#) handout also available on our 'speech' page.

Your speech and language therapist will share whether your child is working on the sound at the beginning, middle or end of the words.

Using the target sound word pictures you have been given:

- ⇒ Pick up a picture and say the word for the child to listen to.
- ⇒ Ask them to have a go at saying the word. If your child finds this difficult you may need to model the words first for your child to copy before they can say the word accurately on their own.

Activity ideas

- Hide pictures of the target sound around the room. Ask the child to find them and name what they have found
- Collect objects that begin with this sound and put them in a bag. Ask the child to feel inside the bag and guess what it is, naming the object.
- Label the pictures you have been given alongside games you already have such as snap, jenga, puzzles etc. Say the word 5 times each then take a turn.
- Look through books and try to find pictures containing the child's target sound

What if my child finds this tricky?

- ⇒ Talk to them about how they did and how to try differently next time.
- ⇒ It may help to go back to the 'CVCV' level to recap the level the child is comfortable at.
- ⇒ Contact your Speech & Language Therapist for advice.

Once your child can produce short words correctly most of the time, they are ready to move to the next stage: [Multisyllabic words](#)

Multisyllabic words

Multi-syllabic words are those words with more than one syllable, e.g. 'cake' is one syllable but 'biscuit' has two – 'bis' 'cuit'.

Children who have speech difficulties often find longer words more difficult to say.

- ⇒ Words that contain several syllables (e.g. helicopter) require quick and accurate tongue movements in order for them to be pronounced clearly.
- ⇒ Children who find multi-syllabic words difficult may miss part of the word out e.g. 'computer' is often pronounced as 'puter' and 'tomato' is pronounced as 'mato'.
- ⇒ Your child's speech and language therapist will be able to identify which multisyllabic words to practice.



How can I help a child who has difficulties with longer words?

- ⇒ If the child comes across a word they find difficult, help by breaking it down into syllables e.g. microwave = mi...cro...wave.
- ⇒ Clapping out the syllables words helps to do this. Clap each time there is a syllable, e.g. mi (clap) cro (clap) wave (clap).
- ⇒ You could try writing down each part of the word in segments to help them to understand where the breaks in the word are. Draw images to help with this e.g. pictures of 'my', 'crow' and 'wave'.



- ⇒ To begin with the child will have to think about the movements but gradually they will become automatic.

Once your child can produce multisyllabic words correctly most of the time, they are ready to move to the next stage: **In a Phrase** (see page 9)

Consonant cluster words

Consonant cluster words are words which contain 2 consonant sounds together e.g. 'pl', 'sw', 'tr'. Once your child is able to produce CVC words, further work on the use of consonant clusters may be attempted.

Remind the child that there are 2 sounds to listen for at the beginning/middle/end of the word, depending on what part of the word you are working on. Your child's speech and language therapist will be able to tell you what types of words to practice.



Activity ideas

- Spell the target word and remind the child to listen to the first two sounds (e.g. 'f' and 'l' in the word 'fly'). You could write these letters on a whiteboard, a piece of paper or spell them out with an alphabet jigsaw or magnetic letters
- Practice saying the target word during games together so your child hears how you say the sound. Point to both sounds as you say them.
- Give your child a prompt if they forgot one sound e.g. 'I heard 'ly' that time, I think you missed your 'f' sound. Let's try again, fly'.
- Try hiding pictures of the target sound around the room. Ask the child to find them and name what they have found
- Look through books and try to find pictures containing the child's target sound



What if my child finds this tricky?

- ⇒ It may help to break down the consonant cluster to start with e.g. 'f-ly' while they get used to using both sounds together.
- ⇒ It may help to start with short words e.g. 'fly', 'blue' rather than longer consonant cluster words such as 'floating' or 'blinded'. Start with the short words until your child is confident with these before moving on to the longer words.
- ⇒ Contact your Speech & Language Therapist for advice.

Phrases and sentences

Now the child is able to say their target sound in single words, it is time to practice putting these words into short phrases containing 2-3 words.

- ⇒ If your child is working on the sound 't' they might now practice phrases such as 'big tiger', 'teddy washing'.
- ⇒ Carrier phrases are phrases which can be used often to help at this level. The beginning part of the phrase remains the same and the child fills in the end of the sentence e.g. 'I see a...', 'I like...', 'where is...?' Then over time the child says the whole phrase themselves.

Activity ideas

- ⇒ Use your pictures from CVC level. Ask your child to 'add a word' to describe the picture (e.g. instead of 'car' - 'red car', 'fast car', 'car driving').
- ⇒ Practice using 'I see a...' when outside to spot words beginning with the sound e.g. 'I see a TV'.
- ⇒ Incorporate the sound into favourite games/activities which include the target sound. E.g. if your child is working on 't' - can they tell you to 'turn the page' when reading? Or say it in commonly used phrases e.g. 'tidy up time'. Try to find a few key words to practice during games (e.g. if you are building, practice saying 'brick on top' or 'it's my turn' and model that target sound).

What if my child finds this tricky?

- ⇒ You may need to have several turns to show your child how to make a short phrases and sentences. Try doing this together so your child hears your productions.
- ⇒ If your child replaces the target sound with something else e.g. 'red tar', model the correct phrase to them 'red car'. You can give small amounts of feedback e.g. 'I didn't hear your 'k' sound that time' but make sure to give more praise than corrections. Saying 'nice 'k' sound in 'kangaroo well done' is more effective than corrections.

Generalisation

Your child can now produce their target sound in sentences most of the time. They might be able to do this when practicing but now need more practice to use this sound in their everyday conversations. This process is called 'generalisation'.

Top tips

- Have a '**Talking Time**' each day where you play a game or have a conversation (e.g. in the car or over dinner). Let your child know that you will be listening for their new sound for a short period of time. Make sure not to give feedback too often as this can be frustrating for your child. Daily talking time for 5-10 minutes should work best.
- If you hear the child forget their sound, you can pretend to be confused e.g. 'a tat?' (cat) and see if your child can correct. Give praise for corrections. This will encourage them to correct themselves in the future.
- Give choices e.g. Child: 'the tat is eating' Adult says 'tat or cat?'
 Child: 'cat' Adult: 'yes the cat is eating'
- Listen carefully to the child and praise them when they have used their new sound correctly, 'That was a lovely 'd' sound in dog'.
- Praise the child if you notice them correcting their own speech.
- You could try making a bookmark with the new sound written on to act as a reminder when reading.
- Make a scrapbook, by cutting out or drawing pictures with the new sound in. Talk about the pictures.
- With older children, try saying tongue twisters or poems that have their new sound in.
- With older children, when listening to them read, first look for written words that contain their new sound. Then encourage them to remember the sound when they are reading the whole paragraph or page to you.