

Mrs. Fischer's "School" of Speech




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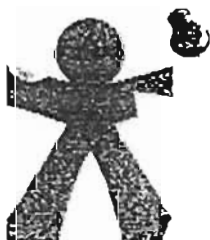
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Oral Motor Exercises for Better Speech



Oral motor exercises help the muscles in the mouth and face to work better for speech, eating, and saliva control. Below are some things you can do with any child just for fun, and target better oral motor control at the same time!

- Blowing bubbles: This works on exercising the muscles that make our lips round for the /w/ sound, works on breath control and support, and just about all children love bubbles!
- Licking peanut butter or marshmallow crème with the tongue after it has been placed on the roof of the mouth or behind the top front teeth. These exercises work on tongue lifting and if you put some on one side of the cheek it helps for the tongue to move side to side.
- Put cheerios or applejacks on the table and have your child spear one with his tongue. This may be difficult for him to understand but you can show him! The child has to aim and protrude tongue past the lips. This exercise works on tongue protrusion and can aid with producing the /th/ sounds.
- Rub syrup, frosting or peanut butter on the outside of your child's lips so he can lick his lips with his tongue. This works on tongue control and protrusion.
- Play a funny face making game with a mirror. Make silly

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faces in the mirror while you are brushing your child's teeth at night and try to get him to imitate. This is a natural time to be in front of a mirror, so it's a perfect time to try some oral-motor exercises! These exercises work on overall facial muscle control and movement, and allows your child to see what happens when he moves his lips, cheeks, and tongue in different ways. These can help aid articulation difficulties. Some examples include sticking out your tongue, puckering your lips and opening your mouth. Try to play a funny face making game without the mirror as well.

- Get some harmonicas, horns, party horns, and/or flutes, (available at most discount or dollar stores) and allow your child to play them a few times a day. These promote sucking and blowing skills, including lip closure, lip rounding, breath control, and breath support. You can also try blowing through a straw. A fun game to try is to race blowing cotton balls off of the table.
- Get rid of sippy-cups! Sippy-cups can promote tongue thrust, which causes the tongue to push forward when swallowing, can cause dental problems, and can promote the development of deviant speech production. Instead, use a cup with a lid and plastic straw. You can find these items at Target, Wal-Mart, etc.
- Use vibrating toys around the face and mouth, use a vibrating toothbrush for their mouth (move the toothbrush around their entire mouth if they will let you). These stimulate the muscles, and promote more musculature awareness.
- Give your child different textures of foods. Try various foods such as spicy foods, crunchy foods, sour flavors, etc.
- Use some "chewy" toys. These are great for kids that like to chew on things, put things in their mouth and have problems with controlling their drool. You can find some great ones at www.integrationscatalog.com, and www.superduperinc.com.

*Taken from the Florida Speech Language Website:
www.floridaspeech.com*

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