

### Practising Sounds with a Vowel

#### Top Tips

- These activities are for practising blending sounds with a vowel (e.g. s + ee = 'see').
- The therapist will tell you which target sound(s) to practise and whether to practise blending before or after a vowel.
- Model the sounds for your child to copy. As they become more confident with the activity they may be able to have a go without a model.
- If your child finds it difficult to blend the sounds together, try leaving a gap between the target sound and the vowel sound (e.g. 'm...arhh' or 'eee...d'). Gradually reduce the gap between the target sound and the vowel (e.g. 'm.....ee' to 'm..ee' then 'mee').
- For the sounds 'p, t, k, f, s, sh', the therapist may advise you to practise these by adding a 'h' before the vowel (e.g. p+hair = pair, t+high = tie, k+har = car, f+hair = fair, s+hee = see).
- Praise every attempt. If your child produces the sound(s) accurately, tell them. If they produce the sound(s) inaccurately, praise them for 'having a good try'.
- Focus on the specific sound(s) that the therapist has advised you to practise – there may be other sounds that are tricky but they may not be the focus of therapy at this stage.
- Find times of day when your child is most responsive to practising and work within their attention span.
- Keep practise sessions fun by varying the games that you play.
- Aim to practise regularly. 5-10 minutes a day is better than 1 hour once a week.
- If it's really hard and your child is getting frustrated, stop and have a go another time.

#### Activity ideas

##### **Turn taking games**

Play any turn taking game (e.g. pop-up pirate, snakes and ladders, monkey tree). Before you have a turn, try to make the sound with a vowel.

##### **Ladder game**

If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille or in a different language, please contact your health professional

Draw a ladder and place a vowel sound on each row. Climb the ladder with your finger or a teddy/animal/counter. As you climb, blend the target sound with each vowel.

### **Draw around your hand**

Draw around your child's hand and put the target sound in the middle of the picture (in their palm). Draw or put vowel pictures at the tips of each finger. Use your finger to trace from the target sound in the middle to the vowel sound at the end of each finger. Blend the sounds together whilst you do this. Then let your child have a go.

### **Fishing**

Make a fishing rod with a stick, piece of string and a magnet tied at one end. Lay out the vowel pictures with a paper clip on each. Let your child fish for a vowel picture. Place the target sound picture on the table with the vowel picture next to it. Get your child to blend the sounds together.

### **Skittles**

Set up two rows of skittles or empty bottles/cans. Stick a vowel picture on each skittle. Get your child to roll a ball at the skittles and then blend the vowels they have knocked over with their target sound.

### **Hide and seek**

Hide the vowel pictures round the room. Ask your child to find one at a time and blend the vowel with their target sound.

### **What next?**

When your child can blend the sounds together with good accuracy and consistency (e.g. correct on 8/10 occasions), contact your child's Speech and Language Therapist for advice on what to do next.