

### Introduction to Speech Sound Therapy

#### **Why do some children need speech sound therapy?**

Some children's speech sounds develop slowly or in an unexpected way. These children might need extra help to learn the correct way to say sounds.

Speech sound therapy takes lots of hard work. Children need to have good attention and listening skills to benefit fully. The therapy programme needs to be practised several times during the week at home and in nursery/school.

#### **The speech and language therapist's role**

The therapist will use a speech sound assessment to identify which sounds your child needs to work on.

#### **The supporting adult's role**

The therapist will give advice and activities for your child to practise in between sessions. They will need an adult to help them practise. These activities are an essential part of the speech sound therapy. Research shows that children make more progress when the activities are practised regularly.

The therapist may recommend some cueing strategies to support your child's communication. This could include using some signs (e.g. Makaton) and/or symbol pictures.

#### **What happens in therapy?**

Therapy is designed to be fun! It involves playing games and other activities.

There are different stages to work through, which can include both listening to and producing sounds. These are outlined below. It is important that your child is confident with one stage before moving on to the next.

**Changing the way a child uses sounds takes time and practise. It can take up to a few months before they are able to remember to use a new sound in their everyday talking.**

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

### The stages

#### Listening to the sound:

1. on its own (single sound)
2. with a vowel
3. in words
4. in words pairs (minimal pairs)
5. in other people's mistakes (error detection)

#### Saying the sound:

1. on its own
2. with a vowel
3. in words
4. in short phrases
5. in sentences
6. in everyday talk

Your child's therapist will advise which stage(s) your child needs to work on.

### General advice for practising speech sounds

- Practise little and often, 5-10 minutes every day is better than one hour once a week.
- Find times to practise which work best for you and your family.
- Minimise distractions by turning off the TV / tablets / phones etc.
- Try to make the work fun and interesting, for example vary the practise sheets each day and include the work in a simple game.
- Take turns to practise the words/sentences with your child. This will allow them to hear good speech models.
- Encourage and praise your child even if they are finding the work tricky. This will help them to keep trying.
- Keep practising even if your child begins to find the work easy.
- Always ask your child's therapist for further advice if needed.