

General strategies for children with speech sound difficulties

1. Work on general active listening skills, e.g. children have to follow instructions; listen out for words in a story and perform an action when they hear it; circle a picture when it's mentioned in a story.
2. Work on phonological awareness, listening out for sounds in words. E.g. children post a picture if the word starts with a given sound; children do different things when you say similar words, e.g. pretend to open the lock – key, and pretend to have a drink – tea; clapping out syllables of a word and move that number of footsteps, croc-o-dile – 3 steps.
3. Model correct pronunciation instead of correcting, when reading too.
4. Play with words – read books with funny rhymes; make up words for monsters; think of rhyming nonsense words that rhyme with their name; think of alliterative phrases/sentences with their name – joyful Joshua juggling jellies.
5. Repeat back what you've understood, so that the child knows what you have and haven't understood.
6. Ask for "clues". "Who did this?", "When?" "Where?" etc.
7. Praise the child for saying a lot even if you haven't understood. Stress that you want to know what they mean and perhaps ask someone else if they know what they might mean.
8. Get as much information as you can from home re. pets' names, grandparents (do they call granny nanny etc.) as it all helps to cue into what the child's saying. A home-school book can be useful.
9. Maintain eye contact.

10. Context helps! Can they say something or show you something that helps you understand the context.
11. Make sure you are familiar with their speech sound error patterns to help you predict what a word might be e.g. do they often use 'd' instead of 's'?
12. Provide other ways of communication alongside speech e.g. signs/gesture (e.g. Signalong), grids of pictures about the topic, things to point to, drawing, writing.