

Language Development

Improving poor motor skills

Try these play-based activities with all young children who are just starting to talk. You may find them particularly useful for children who seem to want to speak but struggle to say anything clearly. The general activities may be particularly helpful for children who seem 'clumsy' or lack co-ordination, but most young children will find them fun to do.

Making faces

- Make faces in the mirror together and/or at each other.
- Action songs involving face movements, for example puff out cheeks, smile like a clown, stick out tongue and try to touch nose.
- Songs or games that involve pretending to eat.

Blowing or sucking games

- Blow football.
- Drinking through a straw.
- Blowing musical Instruments.
- Blowing boats across the water.
- Blowing bubbles.
- Sucking through a straw, for example picking up pieces of paper.

Activities for the tongue

Licking or pretending to lick jam or honey from around the mouth using tongue and not lips. Licking a lolly using the tongue only. If necessary gently hold the child's jaw open, so they cannot use their lower lip and are forced to concentrate on their tongue.

Activities for the lips

- Songs with exaggerated "oo's", "ee's" and "ah's", for example "the wheels on the bus".
- Animal sounds, for example "a mouse goes "ee".
- Making lip prints.

General

- Throwing and catching.
- Finger play exercises and rhymes.
- Threading beads.
- Copying patterns.
- Plasticine modelling.
- Games that encourage hand-eye coordination.
- Clapping in time to a simple rhythm.
- Balancing on one foot with eyes closed.
- Rhyming - using musical instruments.
- Leaning right' and left'.

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