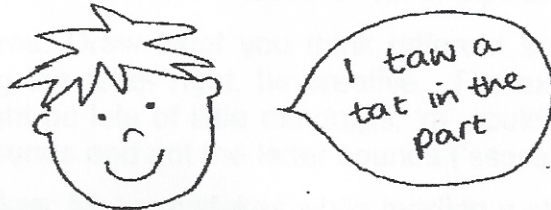
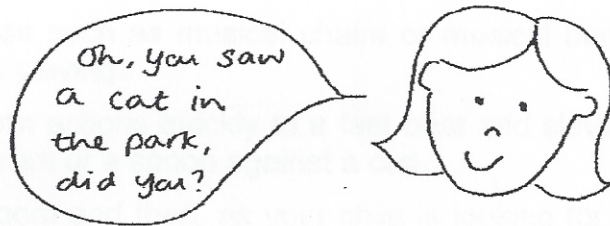


## Helpful Hints for a Child with Unclear Speech

- ✓ Listen to what your child says and not how they say it.



- ✓ If your child says a word with a wrong sound in it or a sound missing, repeat what they said correctly, as if you are continuing the conversation. This is called modelling.



- ✗ Don't make your child copy you or say the words again.
- ✗ Don't correct your child's speech by saying "no...it's a cat".
- ✗ Don't tell your child that they are saying something the wrong way.
- ✗ Don't pretend to understand. Ask your child to show you, point to it or mime.
- ✓ Encourage your child to look at your face while you are talking so they can see what your lips, mouth and tongue are doing.
- ✓ Repeat, repeat, repeat! Say the words lots and lots of times. The more your child hears the words, the sooner they will start to understand and use a full range of sounds.
- ✓ Make sure everyone in the family follows these suggestions.

## Activities to help develop speech sounds

- **Reduce background noise**, as this makes it more difficult for your child to pick out your speech from all the other sounds around. Switch off the telly and the radio.
- **Rhyming books**: share books with lots of rhyming words or words that start with the same sounds such as *The Cat in the Hat* or alphabet books.
- **Draw pictures**: Draw what you think different sounds might look like. Don't worry about getting the letter right, be creative. For example, 'sssssss' might look like a snake, 't' might be lots of little raindrops, 'm' could be some yummy food. Remember to say the sounds and not the letter sounds ('sssss' not 'ess').
- **Make mistakes**: Make mistakes while reading a story or playing games by getting the words wrong, e.g. "Insy Winsy Elephant" and calling Mum or Dad by the wrong name. Can your child spot the mistakes?

**Your child may find it difficult at first to sit and listen to speech sounds. Try listening for 'bigger' sounds first with these activities:**

- **Stop and Go games**: Play games such as musical chairs or musical bumps where they can only move if the music is playing.
- **Move in time to the beat**: Perform actions quickly to a fast beat and slowly to a fast beat. Make a beat by banging a drum or a spoon against a cup.
- **Hide the toy**: Hide a toy in the room and then, as your child is looking for it, make a noise. This could be clapping your hands or banging a drum. When they are close to the toy, bang loud and bang quietly when they are further away.
- **Nursery Rhymes**: Sing action rhymes such as *Row Your Boat*, *Twinkle Twinkle and Insy Winsy Spider*.
- **Copy Me**: Clap a rhythm and encourage your child to copy you. Gradually increase the number of claps. You could also use actions that your child has to copy in the right order. Collect pairs of objects that make a noise (such as two bunches of keys, two empty crisp packets, and 2 cups with a spoon in). Give one set to your child and keep one yourself. Make a sound with one of the objects and ask your child to copy you. Then, hide your objects under the table. Can they copy you from just listening to the sounds?
- **Listen to every day sounds**: talk about noises that you can hear around you such as birds, cars, rain, cats etc. Try and find what is making the noise. For example, go to the window to look at the rain.
- **Who can you hear?**: Place a small number of animal toys or pictures in front of your child. Make the noise of one of the animals and say "which one can you hear?". Take turns to make the animal sounds. You could also try recording familiar people (Mum, Dad, grandparents, brothers, sisters, friends etc). Put out photos of these people then play the voices and ask your child to match the voice to the photo.