



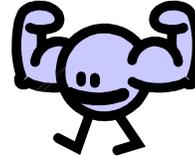
Laguna Beach Language & Speech Clinic

Helping Children and Empowering Parents

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Practicing at Articulation Therapy at Home



Often times, I will send home handouts for practice. The goal is to build awareness and train the muscle to hit placement points to increase speech intelligibility. I like to say that articulation therapy is like going to the gym. The more frequent the workouts and reps, the easier and better it gets, without it...you just get sore! That's why practicing at home, even a little bit...makes a big difference in progress. The activities sheets often target articulation and reinforce skills that have already been completed in therapy. While I provide a folder to store and organize my handouts, many families are adding to their speech binder with copies of handouts so pictures can be used again; to cut, color, made it to matching games etc. Plus with Google search engine for images, many kids and parents are making their own worksheets with free pictures they find on line.

Keep it fun. Pressure to perform must be low, so game based practice helps. For example, your child imitates a sound or names a picture then tries to make a basket, or puts another puzzle piece in, colors a picture or gets a turn in a board game such as Candyland. If a game doesn't work or isn't needed, you can easily use the handouts to practice and limit "homework session" 5-10 minutes a day. Setting a timer is a good way to show that there will be an end to those kids that are a bit fidgety. Sometimes to encourage school age kids to practice, I tell them they can do practice during commercial breaks but they have to record themselves. Many phones now have an audio-memo capability or you can use a hand held recording device. During one show, your child will practice a few times for a few minutes and by recording themselves they can hear what they sound like and start developing an awareness of their actual sound production. Remember, it's important to have success during practice at home. You are helping your child build a new kinesthetic image so repetition and high accuracy are key components. If the exercises become too easy, we can look at progressing to another level of difficulty.

Levels of Prompting It's good to make sure you know what level of prompting and cueing is needed during practice. So here is a brief description of prompting and practice levels.

Imitation is when you say it and then your child says it. The Cued level is when your child is able to name the picture or object presented without your verbal model. The next level is Spontaneous, which is learning and achieving mastery at conversation. To get to mastery,

practice must go through each level of prompting before mastery. For instance, when learning an /s/ sound. It will be taught and practiced at sound level, then word, phrases, sentences and finally mastered within conversation. Each level is prompted at imitation, then cued level before moving to accurate spontaneous productions. When accuracy is at 80% across a few days, then your child may have mastered that activity at that level and is ready for the next level and the prompt to be faded. Awareness of sound production and auditory discrimination skills are also targeted so that a child develops an ability to self-monitor and self-correct. During the course of therapy, many levels of practice and prompting are happening at one time due to the number of goals and progress. So if your practice is at imitation level, be careful not to correct your child's productions during conversation. It may be frustrating to get corrections at a level that isn't mastered vs. someone listening to your child's story. It may be that the sounds around the targeted one make it more difficult to pronounce or perhaps there are too many targets in one word or sentence. During discourse, you can model the articulation targets by emphasizing it with volume, pitch and phrasing.

Make Sense?

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