

Practising Sounds in Single Words

Top Tips

- These activities are for practising using sounds in single words (not in sentences).
- The therapist will tell you which target sound(s) to practise and whether to practise at the beginning, in middle or at the ends of words.
- Take turns with your child. When it's your turn, occasionally say the wrong sound in the word and see if your child notices. This helps to increase your child's awareness of the sound(s) in words.
- Praise every attempt. If your child produces the sound(s) accurately in the word, tell them. If they produce the sound(s) inaccurately, praise them for 'having a good try'.
- Focus on the specific sound(s) that the therapist has advised you to practise – there may be other sounds in the words that are tricky but they may not be the focus of therapy at this stage.
- Find times of day when your child is most responsive to practising and work within their attention span.
- Keep practise sessions fun by varying the games that you play.
- Aim to practise regularly. 5-10 minutes a day is better than 1 hour once a week.
- If it's really hard and your child is getting frustrated, have a go another time.

Activity ideas

Turn taking games

Use games that you have at home (e.g. pop up pirate, monkey tree, snakes & ladders, jigsaws). Put a pile of pictures face down. Before having a turn in the game, pick a picture and say the word.

Skittles

Stick a picture onto each skittle. If you knock down a skittle, say the word.

Roll the dice

Roll a dice and repeat the word for the number of times shown on the dice.

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Pairs

Have 2 sets of pictures. Lay some picture pairs face down. Take turns to turn over two cards. Say the words. If they match, you can keep the pair.

Lotto

Each person has a sheet of pictures. Have another set of pictures cut up and placed face down. Take turns to turn over a picture and say the word. Who can fill up their lotto board first?

Fishing game

Use a magnetic fishing game. Stick a picture on each fish (with blu tac or a paperclip) and put them face down. If you catch a fish, say the word on it. If you say it accurately, you can keep the fish, if not the other person gets it (or it goes back into the sea/pond).

Stepping stones

Make some stepping stones (you could use cushions, pieces of paper, hoops). Put a picture on each 'stone'. Put some pictures of crocodiles randomly in between some of the stepping stones. Take turns to throw the dice and move along the 'stones'. If you land on a stepping stone, say the word. If it is incorrect, have another try. If you land on a crocodile, move back 1 space.

Tiddlywinks

Put out some of the pictures close together on the table. Take turns to flick counters like tiddlywinks onto the pictures and say the word that you land on. You can win the words you say correctly.

Kim's game

Put some of pictures on the table. Your child looks at them for a while, and then closes/covers their eyes. Remove one (or more) picture. Ask your child to look again and guess which picture has gone.

Noughts and Crosses (Tic Tac Toe)

Arrange 9 pictures in 3 rows and 3 columns. Use counters or buttons to cover the pictures and say the words as you do so. The first person to cover 3 pictures in a row/column is the winner.

Quiz

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Put some pictures on the table. Take turns to describe a picture for the other person to guess.

Posting boxes

Have a post box (you could make one from a cereal box). Say the word before posting the picture into the box.

Run to the word

Put some of the pictures around the room. Your child runs/hops/walks/skips to the picture and says the word.

Hide and seek

Hide the pictures around the room for your child to find and say the word.

Cars

Put out some of the pictures. Roll a toy car to a picture and say the word on the picture. You can also do this game with other toys (e.g. throwing a ball or beanbag).

Find the counter

Put some pictures on the table. Hide a counter under one of the pictures. Take it in turns to say a word and turn over the picture card to see if you can find and win the counter.

What next?

When your child can say their sound(s) in the words with good accuracy and consistency (e.g. correct on 8/10 occasions), contact your child's speech and language therapist for advice on what to do next.