

Tips for Working with Infants and Toddlers with Cleft Lip and/or Palate

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Tips for Early Vocal Play and Babbling

- Take time to listen to baby's sounds
- Take turns, imitate and wait
- Repeat the sounds the baby already makes
- Add in easy sounds M, Y, L, W & vowels in vocal play
- Don't repeat unusual sounds from back of throat or think they are cute; replace with a consonant that you both can make
- Use front sounds, nasal (M, N), open sounds (vowels), raspberries (uses lips and oral air; simplify to Puh)

Remember: Babbling gives practice with consonant-vowel syllable. It also helps the baby start to attach meaning to sounds which become first words.

Tips for Adding Sounds and Words

- Select word targets with high interest and meaning (Functional Vocab)
- Use words that begin with familiar sounds already being practiced
- Use new words to practice a new sound
- Add in stop consonants (B, D) after palate surgery
- May take time before a new sound is used routinely
- Don't forget to add new vowels
- Make an exaggerated, loud sigh to lead to H
- Show, feel, see, tell where and how sound is made

Remember: Children select words based on sounds that are easy to make and that are being practiced. New speech sounds develop in the context of words.

Tips to Track Progress and Add to Learning

- Listen for new sounds (B, P, D, G), even (F, S) and vowels, too
 - Keep a list of sounds and words attempted and made correctly
 - Reinforce the correct place to make the sound (lips, tongue, palate)
 - Make the sounds and words FUN and add inflection to your voice
 - Ignore sounds made in the throat or hissy nose sounds; replace with mouth sounds
 - Expand sound inventory through sound play and expansion of first words
 - Emphasize use of vowels. Vowels need VP closure and add to sound and word inventory.
 - Help distinguish meaning and expand on first words even without the consonant.
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To access the recorded Part I and II webinar series, visit the [2019 Talks on Tuesdays Archived Recordings](#) on the VA Early Intervention Professional Development Center site.