

HANDY HINTS 4

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
- Blowing boats across the water.
- Drinking through a straw.
- Blowing bubbles.
- Blowing musical instruments.
- 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
- Games that encourage hand-eye coordination
- Finger play exercises and rhymes
- Clapping in time to a simple rhythm.
- Threading beads.
- Balancing on one foot with eyes closed.
- Copying patterns.
- Rhyming - using musical instruments.
- Plasticine modelling.
- Leaning 'right' and 'left'