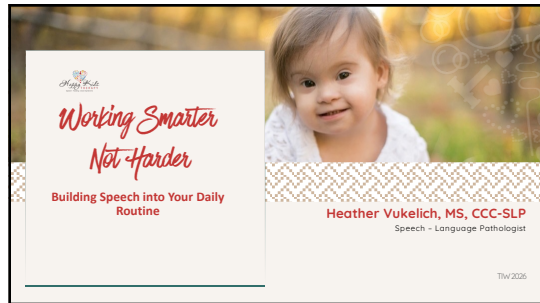
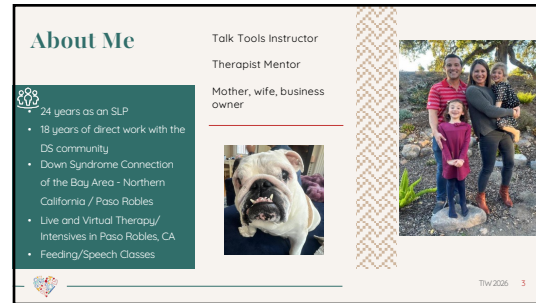




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Why do children with *DS* speak the way they do?

When the inside of your mouth is numb, it makes it very difficult to move muscles to imitate or initiate speech.

Differences in Sensation

Hypotonia

Dysarthria

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Common Profile of Child with Down Syndrome

- Decreased Oral/Facial Sensitivity
- Jaw Weakness
- Tongue Protrusion
- Limited Cheek/Lip Activation

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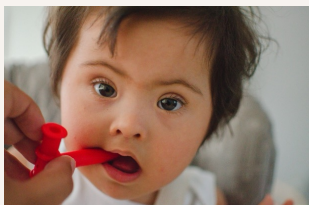
Oral Sensory-Motor Therapeutic Approach

- Activate** Turns on muscles, and directs their movement
- Balance** Balances use of lips, cheeks, jaw, tongue
- Strength** Creates the appropriate amount of strength in the muscle per the task.

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If you are treating the muscles in your child's body – why aren't you treating the muscles in their mouth?



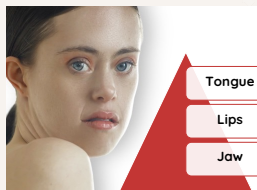
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Dissociation

The separation of movement, based on stability and adequate strength, in one or more muscle groups.

We Need Complete Dissociation for Clear Speech!



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Building Clear Speech in Children with Down Syndrome

Muscle Based Work

- Strengthens, balances, and connects child to their body for improved babbling, imitation, sound placement, breathing, and rest posture.

Oral Placement of Sounds

- Use of supports (tools and facial prompts/cues) to help move a child's mouth into the shape for each sound production.

Today's Topic →

Integrating into Daily Routines

- Use of daily routines to increase verbal speech.

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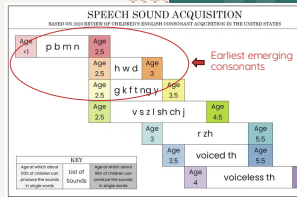
Today's Goals

- 1) Establish current speech level.
- 2) Learn how to integrate into everyday routines.

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Speech Development

- VOWELS first...then consonants.
/ah, uh, ee, ih, oo, oh/
- Early Emerging Consonants:
/p, b, m, t, d, n, w, h, k, g, f, v/



KEY

- Age at which sound first appears in child's speech
- Age at which sound is consistently used in speech
- Age at which sound is used in a single word
- Age at which sound is used in a phrase or sentence

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Babbling & Imitation

Babbling

- Starts after 4-6 months
- Includes vowels and consonants
- Reduplicated syllables "buh buh buh"
- Variegated syllables "muh, guh, buh"
- Babies gain control of babbling over time.
- Children with DS have delayed babbling and limited sound development due to oral motor disorders.

Imitation

- Copied gross motor, fine motor, facial movements and speech sounds.
- Various levels of imitation (sound, syllable, word, phrase, sentence)
- Various syllable shapes and complexities (V, C, CVCV, CV, V-V, VC, CVCVC2 etc.)
- Requires engagement with a partner / joint attention.
- Requires control of oral movement.
- Imitation can be extremely difficult based on the complexity of speech development and delays in oral motor development.

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Levels of Imitation

1. Locate where your child is functioning and slowly progress through stages over the next couple years.
2. Use your oral- sensory supports at all levels to increase access to sounds and imitation accuracy.

Learn More Here
"A Parent's Guide to Shaping Speech - One Sound at a Time" (Webinar)

Establishing a Home Plan and Incorporating Strategies into your Routine 14

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Imitation & Syllable Shapes

Noises:
Grunts, sneezes, coughs, intonation raspberries, exhalates, shrieks, slurping, eating noises, snoring, yawn, baby crying, whisper, animal noises

Goals:
• Joint attention
• Oral Motor Development
• Gestural Imitation

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Imitation & Syllable Shapes

Vowels, Consonants and CVCV

Beginning Phase - It make take minutes for a child to produce a sound. Applaud all approximations.
Goal: Child to feel successful.

Vowels + /m, b, p, h, n, d, k, g, w/ - Early emerging sounds

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Early Sound Imitation Rules



- Model/prompt for a sound, wait 10 seconds for child to imitate. Repeat.
- Try multiple ways to help your child achieve the sound. (Use tools, hand prompts, imitations, gestures)
- Focus on a new sound for a couple minutes before moving on to another sound.
- Place a toy next to your mouth so that your child can see what you are talking about - AND - they can also see your mouth shape.
- Get 10-20 trials in 5 minutes

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Vowel, Consonant and CVCV words

“oh” - open	Mama
“ee” - wee!	Baba
“ow”	Papa
“m” - more	Dada
“ah” - all done	Peepee
“oo” - oops!	Poo poo

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CV & V+V words

Bah - bock	Oh oh - Uh oh
Me	Oh an - orange
Mo - more	Ow I - outside
Pah - pop	I ee - ice cream
Bee	Oh ee - lonely
Moo	

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VC & VCV

Up	Ow	Opo / opeh - open
In	Eat	Ehmo - Elmo
Out	Arm	Appo - Apple
Off	Oat	Eyebah - eye ball
On	Out	Oh no!
It	At	Outeye - outside



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CVC

Mom	Beam	Night
Bob	Beep	Pig
Poop	Mop	Bike
Pop	Hop	Hat
Peep	Map	Cup
Bib	Beep	Boot



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CV1CV2

Baby	Paper
Mommy	Purple
Daddy	People
Puppy	Baseba(II)
Tato	Poppy
Cookie	Mermai(d)



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**Pair Speech Work
with Established
Routines**

Play	Mealtime
Potty	Book Reading
Music	Transitions

Establishing a Home Plan and Incorporating Strategies into your Routine 23

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Happy Kids

Playtime!

You are already playing with your child – why not help increase their speech while you do it?

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Parallel Play – Imitation (child-led)

Pre-Verbal Children

- Engage in parallel play
- Touch your child's face A LOT!
- Imitate their play & vocalizations
- Follow their lead – while also trying to get as many vocalizations of the same sound in a row as possible.

Schuerfeldt 2006 25

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Withholding High Interest Items

1. Hold 1-2 high-interest items your child wants.
2. Model the sounds you want them to say.
3. Wait until they attempt to imitate.
4. Give them the item. (can be toy or action)
5. Works best with items with many pieces
6. Keep pieces in a clear plastic bag so the child can see but can't grab items themselves.
7. At first allow any sound approximation.
8. As the child improves, only accept the correct sound approximation.
9. Use oral placement tools / facial prompts to help your child be successful





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Mealtimes — Opportunities 3x+ p day





Idea ✨

- Food name
- More / Open
- Mmm (yum)

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Potty Time

- Blowing horns / Bubbles
- Reading Practice
- Book Reading
- Withholding toys for sound production
- Flashcards



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Integrating into other therapies



- Reading
- OT
- PT
- Vision
- Swim
- Horseback Riding

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Book Reading Modifications

- Use sound/syllable targets appropriate to your child's stage.
- Use gestures or signs in combination with sounds/words.
- Follow your child's lead by staying quiet and allowing them to initiate sounds.
- Use repetitive words or phrases, or syllable patterns (Hi baby, Hi Mommy, hi daddy, hi puppy)
- Use your own sentence strips taped to each page to target reading + speech at appropriate levels. "I see a bear", "I see a cat" etc.



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Music



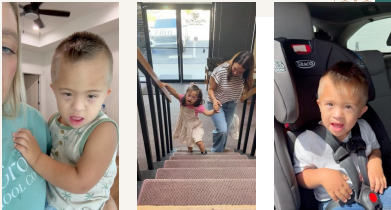
levels

- Gesture
- Sound
- Word
- Phrase

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Transitions



Other ideas

- Out
- Bye!
- Clean up!
- In
- Off

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Happy Kids

Magical Speech Supports ✨

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Siblings

Children will almost always try to imitate other children.



- model a sound / word / phrase
- replay a recorded video of a speech target
- engage in the therapy as a participant
- hold tools for child as they do their work

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Using Mirrors

Using a mirror helps a child connect to their body, so they can feel the movements they are attempting.

- Book reading, therapy activities, eating, talking, oral motor programming



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Video Modeling

Teaching method that uses a video recording to demonstrate a skill or behavior that a student can then learn and imitate.

Basic Video Modeling: A Peer or Adult models the skill or behavior for the child.

Video Self Modeling: The parent records the child themselves doing the good skill.

Ideas of how to use this:

- Video your child when they are producing a sound/word produced correctly.
- Video your child doing each strategy in your routine and play it while you do the strategy.

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Practice Makes Permanent

Perfect practice is the idea that a child will only practice a speech target if it is said correctly.

Drill! Drill! Drill!

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Principles of Motor Learning

Establish stimulus accuracy: Ensure the child understands the target sound or word and can produce an accurate model before starting high-repetition drills. (Perfect Practice :))

Motivate the child: Connect practice items to functional communication goals to drive active engagement. (Withholding / limitation)

High repetition (dose): Require a large number of movement trials (often 50-100+ per 15 min session) so motor patterns (word approximations) become automatic.

Distribution: Spread practice across shorter, frequent sessions (**distributed practice**) rather than one massive, exhausting block (**massed practice**). This is why spreading into your daily routines is wonderful!

Variability: Practice targets across different linguistic contexts, vowels, and phonetic environments (**variable practice**) to build robust mental schemas.

Random vs. Blocked: Move from **blocked practice** (repeating the exact same sound consecutively) during initial skill acquisition to **random practice** (interspersing targets) to promote long-term retention and real-world generalization.

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Real Life → 3-5 Productions = Reward
10 Turns = 30-50 trials (5 min)
90-150 trials = 15 min

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Homework

Weekly Target Word List

Place a sticker on the word in the box. Mark the word in the box (ABC) speech level. Use words in the boxes and the word in the box.

Yay! I love homework!

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How can I find a therapist near me?

- 1) TalkTools: Therapist Locator
- 2) Contact your local DS group or your local tongue tie group and ask for an "Oral Sensory-Motor Therapist" (Speech Pathologist)
- 3) If you don't have a therapist near you, you can contact someone within your state to see if they provide online therapy.
- 4) PROMPT Institute (facial prompting)



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Continued Support with Heather

- 90-minute online consultations (case history + video review)
- 50-minute online consultations (videos review)
- In-Person Evaluations (Danville, CA / Paso Robles, Ca)
- In-Person Intensives (Paso Robles, Cal)



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6-Week Speech Class – Starts October 6th, 2026

- Recorded Modules
- 3x Wk Live Office Hours (T: 10am, W: 12pm, Th: 4pm)
- Create an individualized home program to use for the next year
- Gain confidence in identifying your child's needs and working together.
- Connect other families/professionals
- \$400



Virtual 6-Week Speech Development Class
Supporting Children with Down Syndrome
First Exposure to The Support Your Child's Individual Needs at 6-Week Guided Class for Parents of Children with Down Syndrome
Deeply understand why your child isn't speaking clearly, and how to use simple techniques to improve their intelligibility in the context of your own home.
Class starts October 6th
Live office hours will be held on multiple days throughout each week to support online class users.

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[illegible]

Virtual Feeding Class for Parents

*A Virtual 4-Week Feeding Class
for Parents of Children With Down
Syndrome*

Empower Your Child to Eat and Drink With Confidence

Are mealtimes a challenge? The Virtual Feeding Class is here to provide you with the tools, strategies, and personalized support needed to help your child thrive.

This 4-week recorded program is designed specifically for children with Down syndrome, aged 6 months and up, to improve feeding skills, muscle function, and mealtime success.

[Transform Mealtimes—Enroll Now](#)



<https://courses.happykidstherapy.com/feeding-class> Tlw 2026 47

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Speech Class Scholarships

The **BURGER FAMILY FOUNDATION**

THERAPY SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 2013, we have provided over 100 scholarships to families who are seeking speech and feeding therapy for their children. These programs are designed to help children overcome barriers to their communication and growth. We have personally benefited from the Happy Kids Therapy services and are committed to helping other families gain access to these invaluable resources.

Happy Kids offers a variety of services to support your child's therapy goals. We provide in-home and out-of-home services, including:

- Speech and language therapy
- Feeding therapy
- Occupational therapy

Feeding therapy services are provided in-home or at our clinic. Speech therapy services are provided in-home or at our clinic. The cost of the application process for the next season's Scholarships is \$100.00.

SPEECH AND FEEDING THERAPY SCHOLARSHIPS



<https://teamironwillapp.neoncrm.com/forms/feeding-therapy> Tlw 2026 48

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Speech Class Scholarships

Self-Determination Program (SDP)

<https://teamironwillapp.neoncrm.com/forms/feeding-therapy> Tlw 2026 49

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