



JANUARY 2024

Let us work on 's'

Happy New Year. We hope this finds you and your family warm and well, having enjoyed the winter break. The tradition of the new year, brings along hopes and dreams for the year ahead. One of mine, is to help my son produce a clear 's' sound. His 's' sounds slushy or it is missing when there are two constants together in a blend such as 'snow' or 'slide'.

As a Speech Therapist, my knowledge is there, but as a mother, my time and patience is as limited as yours, so I aim to embed the practice he needs in everyday activities. Here are some ideas you can try in the classroom between therapy sessions.

1. Listening

My son needs to hear the correct pronunciation many many times (over 1800 times) to say it correctly. Please be mindful that every time he produces the sound incorrectly it cancels out one of my models. So, I model a clear sound when we are:

- **Talking together.** If he says something incorrectly, I will model it back. Yes, it is a snake. A big snake. A long snake. Snake snake snake. For his one mistake, I have emphasized 's' 6 times. If you only manage two models, that is a good start. 10 is the aim!
- **Nursery rhymes.** When driving in the car for example and I have a captive audience, I sing nursery rhymes – emphasizing the 's' sound. So, nursery rhymes with 's' I might choose:
 - o Incy wincy spider (The English version – so incy wincy instead of itsy bitsy).
 - o See saw Margery daw
 - o Sing a song of sixpence

2. Raising awareness that 's' is a long sound.

- I will pretend to be a snake and make the 's' sound. As I say it, I draw a 's' down his arm. He laughs but he is hearing, seeing and feeling it. The laughter that goes with this very quick game is fun too and the multi-sensory approach is helpful to both sides of the brain.

3. Getting him to say it.

- In all honesty at this moment, this is not my priority. I am working on him hearing the sound in words as often as possible. I will increase the opportunities we have to talk about words beginning with 's'. You can do this too, by:
 - o Choosing books with sea side scenes or snow scenes for example.
 - o Talking about the snow outside and going sledging, or on the slide, with your scarf on.
 - o Picking 5 words that you really want to practice and talking about them as many times as you can in the day. To make this easier, maybe talk about these words in circle time or reading time or when lining up. Picking an activity will make it easier for you to remember to do it. If you do this for 3 minutes 7 days a week, you have managed a 21 minute therapy session.

Most of all have fun. Do not expect a child to say the sound soon, just know the work you are doing is having a positive impact in the background. For more advice, please contact us at Building Blocks – details below.