



February 2025

Let us work on 'f'

Wow what a month January was, thank goodness for the sunshine to help with the cold and long nights. My thoughts on 'freezing' and 'froid' (French for cold) have left me thinking about the 'f' sound and a child I am working with who is really struggling with the 'f' sound, so let's talk about how we can help 'f' but these strategies can work for any speech sound.

1. Listening

Evidence suggests a child needs to hear the correct pronunciation many many times (over 1800 times) to say it correctly. Please be mindful that every time they produce the sound incorrectly it cancels out one of your models. So, I model a clear sound when we are:

- **Talking together.** If they say something incorrectly, I will model it back. Yes, it is **five** A big five. Five ducks. Five fish Five, Five, Five. Fort his one mistake, I have emphasized 'f' 8 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 'f' sound. So, nursery rhymes with 'f' I might choose:
 - o Fee fi fo fum
 - o 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 once I caught a fish alive
 - o Five little ducks...

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

- I will pretend to be a fish and make the 'f' sound.
- I draw an 'f' on a piece of paper and show how it's a long sound.
- Compare 'f' to 'p' as a contrast and how they are so short.

3. Getting them to say it.

- In all honesty at this moment, this is not my priority. I am working on them hearing the sound in words as often as possible. I will increase the opportunities we have to talk about words beginning with 'f' – but I do point to my lips when I know they can say the word and wait for them to say it clearly. You can do this too, by:
 - o Choosing books with fun fairs, scenes or fall scenes for example.
 - o Talking about the fun things outside and going **for** a walk, or counting.
 - 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 the car or at bath time or at dinner time. 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 your 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.