

How Teachers Can Help Students with Articulation Problems in the Classroom

Once students have received some speech therapy or assessment with the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and have shown consistency with sound productions in structured activities they need support in using their new sounds outside of the therapy room. You can help in getting these sounds to generalize to conversational speech.

Some ways to support generalization of sounds

Speech Sounds: Recall that we are helping children with speech sounds, not letter names. Instead of saying “remember to say your ‘r’”, we ask children to “remember your RRRR sound”.

Specific Feedback: Reinforce the student for correct production with specific feedback, for example, “Wow! I like how you remembered to say RRRR in the word *run*. You must be working very hard to say that sound.”

Point Out the Sound: During activities such as worksheets and oral reading, go over to the student and point out words that contain the sound that he is working on. Underline the target sound and reinforce the student for correct sound production.

Visual Cues: Develop a visual cue with the SLP that you and the student will use to help him think about his speech sound production (ex. Touch your nose or ear).

Keep a Daily List: Have the student keep a daily list of all the words he encounters that contain the target sounds, such as new curriculum-based vocabulary. Send the list home for practice.

Find a Buddy: Pair up the student with another classmate to help practice for few minutes per day. Your SLP will supply words lists or picture cards. This can also be done during oral reading time.

Hot Sheet: Make a “hot sheet” of some key words that have the child’s sound. Maybe your name? A friend’s name? A word that you might use during your day (ex: “library” if the child is working on L)? Make a list of 2 – 4 of these words that are expected to be produced correctly. “Remember, that’s one of your ‘hot sheet’ words, can you try it again?”

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Provide recasting in conversation

This is simply giving a clear example with no additional instructions, explanations or demands. When you notice an error involving a sound being worked on in therapy, repeat the word correctly yourself, at least once or twice in the context of the conversation. For example:

Child: That's a tunny face.

Adult: Yes, a very funny face. A funny, funny face! I love that funny face. Can you do a funny face?

(You have just modeled a correct F nine times!)

When recasting remember

Avoid Distorting the Sound: Do not distort the sound or word by over-emphasizing it. It is better to draw the sound or word to the child's attention by saying it repeatedly.

YOU say the sounds: Do not ask the child to repeat the word back to you correctly. All you have to do is say the word clearly yourself several times, in a way the child will notice (e.g., as part of a conversation that you are both enjoying).

Let your SLP know of any other tips that you found effective to help the student self-monitor his errors and produce good speech.

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