

Manchester Local Care Organisation

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Advice for Parents and Carers:

Helping Children with Unclear Speech

1. Repeat what the child says, but say the correct speech.

If the child says a word incorrectly, say it back to them but use the correct speech sounds.

This shows you understand and teaches the correct way to say it.

2. Do not make the child repeat words.

Children need to feel calm and confident to try new sounds and improve their speech. Focusing on mistakes and making the child repeat words is not helpful.

3. Build your child's confidence to communicate

If you understand part of what the child says, repeat it to show they did well and encourage them to keep talking.

Use tools like a home-school book and pictures to help guess what the child might say. These can help if the child's speech is unclear.

4. Do not pretend to understand

Try:

- Asking questions.
- Saying "show me..." and encourage the child to point to things.

If you don't understand, tell the child.
Be comforting and then talk about something positive.

5. Children may be able to say a sound but not use it in words.

This is normal. For example, a child might say 's...' but say 'tock' for sock.

The child needs to learn how to use the sound in words, which can take time.

The best way to help is repeating the words correctly so they can hear the correct sounds.

Sometimes, speech therapy may be needed.