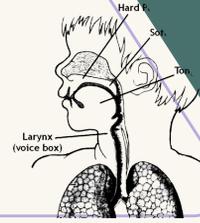




# Speech

The pre-requisite skills to produce speech



## Body positioning and stability are important

It is important for the client's core, neck and head to be stable in order to have good control over finer movements (e.g., movements of the jaw, lips and tongue). Thus, it is important that the client sits comfortable and in a 90-90-90 position before completing motor speech activities.



## Jaw stability is important

Imagine a human pyramid. What happens to the top acrobats when the bottom is weak?

The bottom row of acrobats represents the jaw, the middle row represents the lips and the top row represents the tongue.

Having a stable jaw and good jaw control is important for a client to have good lip and tongue movements. All these movements are needed to produce clear speech.



# Why work on sensory and non-speech activities?

There is mixed evidence about the efficacy of non-speech tasks to improve speech. However, if we look at where the breakdown of skills lie, the client may have reduced speech intelligibility because of sensory or motor difficulties. Hence, it might be helpful to work on these underlying skills **with the eventual goal of producing more accurate speech sounds.**

**It is important for the therapist to monitor the client and evaluate progress to identify what works best for the client.**

# What are some activities a therapist might do to help with speech production?

If the therapist deems these activities helpful, the activities may include the use of tools such as Bite Blocks, chewy tubes, bubbles and other items.

The choice of activity depends on where the client needs help in. For example, the client might have difficulty saying the "O" sound because of difficulties placing his jaw at a certain height and rounding his lips. So, the therapist could start with an oral massage to desensitise the client to having objects in his mouth. Then, the therapist might use Bite Blocks and get the client to blow bubbles. Eventually, the therapist would work on the client's production of the "O" sound.

# How often should intervention happen?

Just like exercising and conditioning other muscles in our body, having more frequent practice to improve speech movements would be helpful. This could come in the form of follow-up at home between therapy sessions, with an arrangement that suits you and your family.

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