

Developmental Area:	Speech
Skill Strand:	Speech Sounds
Skill Phase:	At First
Skill Step:	I add the consonants 'k/c,' 'g,' 'f,' 's' and 'y' to my consonant range. I may begin to use 'l.'

You may be wanting to facilitate this skill step with most of your children if you are considering targeted skill progression and creating firm foundations for progression. You may want to facilitate this skill step with just a few children or with an individual target child as this is their next step.

Whatever the reason, this Practical Ideas Sheet will help you to reflect on your current practice and maybe to get some new ideas. Where possible, the practical ideas are grouped into the three layers of your practice.

### Interactions

- Supporting and Facilitating speech sound development is strongly focussed on our interactions. The key strategies to embed are:
- Accept what the child has said and to repeat it back in the right way.
- Where possible, be face-to-face and on the child's level.
- If the child is slightly distracted, gently touch them on the arm or do something similar, encouraging them to focus on you and to look at your face before you model back the language.
- Sometimes, pull out the main word in the sentence which contains the sound change or omission. Repeat this back first before repeating back the whole sentence.
- Where you have not understood, take the blame. Don't fob the child off when you haven't understood but avoid saying the you haven't understood or that you don't know what they are saying at all costs! Instead, use an excuse such as not knowing what something is, the fact that it is too noisy, that you have poorly ears or that you can't remember something. Use these as excuses why the child needs to show you or to tell you a little bit more about it.
- If the child is beginning to talk out of the here-and-now, perhaps telling you about things they have done at home which you find hard to understand, encourage the child to bring in an object or photos from home. This visual support will help you to tune-in and make things easier.

### Targeted Use of the Learning Environment and Daily Routines

The above interaction strategies should be utilised throughout the learning environment and within your daily routines. More targeted use of the learning environment would be to:

- Make sure you add vocabulary that starts with these new target sounds. Do this as you play and explore in the same way that you would add language normally. However, sometimes say a word with these sounds in on its own or within a very

short phrase so that the word stands out. You can do this as the names of things (nouns), action words (verbs) and describing words (concepts) come up. However, if you want you could identify what these words might be within your different daily routines or within the different areas of your provision.

- As you use and explore resources or as you find things, clap-out words by syllables as you say them. This should be gentle and relaxed and just something that you do sometimes.
- Make up rhymes alongside your daily routines or draw the child's attention when things rhyme. This helps to notch up the level of rhyme that children hear outside or your songs and rhymes or rhyming stories.
- What rhyming opportunities do you have in your different areas? Do you want to create more? For example, do I want to deliberately add a box of toffees to the home corner so that I can have one when I drink coffee?

## Focussed Activities

Unless you are told otherwise by a Speech and Language Therapist who knows an individual child, focussed activities for speech sound development should focus on listening to words, targeting skill steps within the Auditory Discrimination and Phonological Awareness Skill Strands of Launchpad. Activities can, therefore, easily be carried out with groups of children as these are skills you will want to and need to develop with everyone.

When the child is older and where you are backtracking to this skill step, you might need to create more individual opportunities. However, where possible embed these into the learning environment rather than seeing this only as an 'activity' issue.

Activities might include:

- Listening to the difference between two rhyming words. Can the child hear the difference? For example, get a toy boat or a picture of a boat and put it next to a real coat or a picture of a coat. When you say coat or boat, can the child point to or put a counter next to the one you have said. If you were doing this in a group, these objects/pictures could be in the middle and you could go round the circle taking turns. Alternatively, you could give each child their own coat and boat so that each child has a turn every time you say a word. Say the words in a random order so that children can't predict a pattern which they can do if you simply use an alternating pattern. Also make sure you don't look directly at or point to the right one as you say it. Obviously do this with a range of different words. Where you are using pictures, remember that photos and coloured pictures will be easier to process visually. When you are doing an activity like this, you are actually working on Auditory Discrimination Skill Step 7, creating opportunities for the children to hear the difference between minimal pairs.
- Clap-out words by syllables. This can be woven into existing activities such as clapping-out children's names at the start of another group or as you say hello to each other, clapping-out the names of characters in stories that you share or clapping out the names of things you are using such as the names of shapes if you are focussing on early maths.
- Create specific opportunities to clap-out words by syllables, for example putting objects in a feely bag, taking it in turns to find something, name it and then for you all to clap that word out.

- Use musical instruments instead of clapping to bang or shake the syllable rhythm of a word out.
- Songs and rhymes
- Rhyming stories. Stories where there is a focus on rhythm and rhyme are particularly useful. Just be aware that some of these stories can have quite a high language load and you might need to consider this with certain children.
- Rhyming lottos can support here if the child is a bit older and ready for them.
- Choose a concept that starts with one of the target sounds such as “fast” or “yellow.” Gather together some objects or objects and pictures for some things that are fast or that are yellow. Then also get another set of objects/pictures of things that are either not fast or not yellow. Mix these together in a bag or box. During the focussed activities, ask the children to help you sort them out into two piles, indicating things that are yellow and things that are not yellow or two piles which indicate things that are fast and things that are not fast. As you play this game you are building quite a few skills. These include listening and turn-taking, vocabulary as you name the objects or pictures, concept vocabulary, building semantic links (Listening for Meaning & Semantic Sorting) and also the understanding of ‘not’ (Concept, Abstract & Non-Literal Skill Strand.)