

Get that th just right!

by

Heard
In Speech

F.A.Q.

How do we teach the “th” sound?!

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) use a variety of techniques to teach a good “th.” One way an SLP may teach a sound is by simply discussing where the articulators (the lips, tongue, teeth, etc.) are when the sound is made.

SLPs may also get in the mouth, literally (and with gloves), to help the student feel and place the articulators where they need to be. Another method of instruction is where we manipulate another sound to make our target sound. Some tips are on the right hand side of this handout!

So we learned how to make an “th”

... Now what?

One of our first goals is to just make the sound all by itself, but our work does not stop there. We must be able to carryover that success into syllables, simple words, more complex words, phrases, sentences, readings, and conversation. Our techniques that we have learned now become cues that we can refer back to as we continue speech!

When do we graduate?

That is not an exact answer. The ultimate goal is for sounds to be produced appropriately in unstructured conversation (like talking with friends or in class) 80% of the time before dismissal.

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Thumbs up!

Techniques for a just right “th”!

- 1. Mirror, mirror:** “Th” is one of the most visual sounds. Most kiddos substitute /f/ for “th.” By using a mirror or Web cam, the child is able to get visual feedback (and not just auditory feedback) on their sounds. Many students get excited about using PhotoBooth on the Mac or an iPhone camera to show off their just right “th!”
- 2. Tongue + teeth:** When we make “th,” our tongue is between our upper and lower teeth. Quiz the child on where their tongue needs to be when they make a “th” sound. “TH” can be made with, (i.e., “this”) or without voice, (i.e., “thin”). Take that into consideration when practicing target words.
- 3. Self-monitoring** is an important step for speech practice. Record audio/video of the child for him or her to watch or listen to and decide whether their production was good or needed some work. See if the child can figure out what he or she could have done better. Take data with the child (+ for a great production or - if the sound needs more work!) and calculate percentages. 80-100% accuracy consistently is ideal before the child moves to the next step, (i.e., isolated sounds > syllables or words->phrases).