

Getting the "R's" Out

Simple Speech Exercises by Sandra Garant

If your child is having trouble pronouncing the sound "r" correctly, he is probably placing the sound too close to the lips, so that it sounds more like a "w." The "r" has to begin in the throat, similar to the hard "g" sound as in "go."

Ask your child to take a deep breath and growl like an angry dog. Let her put her fingers on your throat when you growl so she can feel the vibrations. Then have her feel her own throat for vibrations. Limit the growling to five rounds of about five seconds each as it can cause a strain on the throat muscles. It doesn't have to be especially loud.

Work on tongue twisters a few minutes a day. The last two twisters distinguish between the "w" and the "r" sounds, switching from one to the other.

"Around the rocks the rugged rascal ran."

"Stir the turkey stew, sir."

"The red leather is wet, and the yellow leather is wetter than the red."

"Ron Williams won the race walk."

For ages five and up only. Put the tip of a clean popsicle stick or the handle of a teaspoon between your child's front teeth and have him talk. He can repeat the tongue twisters above or read sentences out of a book. The mouth has to work harder to form the sounds while hanging onto the stick. Do not put marbles in your child's mouth as Professor Higgins did to poor Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*. The stick and spoon handle are safer than marbles, but be sure your child is sitting still to prevent injury.

Work on the above exercises about three days a week for five to ten minutes at a time.

Our thanks to Mrs. Sandra Garant for sharing these exercises

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