

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Clearer Speech at Home: Help Your Child Be Understood

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✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. Help your child say sounds more clearly and be understood by family, teachers and friends. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

If people outside your family often cannot understand your child, the single most useful thing you can change at home is how you answer a word that comes out wrong. Say the word back correctly, warmly, and carry on — “Yes, a car!” Making a child repeat a word until it is right usually teaches them that talking is risky, so they talk less rather than more clearly.

A rough guide helps too. Speech and language therapists broadly expect someone outside the family to understand about half of what a two-year-old says, around three-quarters at three, and nearly everything at four — while a few famously late sounds (s, l, sh, ch, th and r) are still settling well past that. Sources put these figures a little differently, so treat them as a guide, not a test. This page is one of our **free home therapy programs** for parents, and if your own four-year-old is still hard for other people to follow, our guide to **why a four-year-old can still be hard to understand** goes further into the likely reasons.

What follows is the free five-week program we would hand a parent after a session: small, calm techniques that fold into meals, bath time and play. It works alongside a proper assessment, never instead of one. If something is worrying you, do **book a speech and language check** as well — this goes best walking beside a therapist.

Distance need not stop you. Families who travel in from further out, such as Layyah or Lodhran, usually block several sessions into one trip and keep a home program running in between, so the drive buys real ground rather than one short appointment.

گھر پر آج یہ کریں

اردو • Urdu

بچے کی بات کو زیادہ صاف اور واضح بنانے میں نرمی سے مدد دیں۔
ہر لفظ آہستہ اور صاف بول کر بچے کو سنائیں، جلدی نہ کریں۔
غلط بولنے پر ڈانٹیں یا زبردستی درست کروانے کی کوشش نہ کریں۔
صحیح آواز خود بول کر بچے کو سنائیں تاکہ وہ نقل کرے۔
آوازوں کے مزے دار کھیل کھیلیں، جیسے ”پ پ پ“ یا جانوروں کی آوازیں نکالنا۔

♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Children who drop sounds off words or swap one for another — “tar” for “car”, “tup” for “cup”.
- ✓ Toddlers and young children whose speech only close family can really make out.
- ✓ Children who are chatting away in full sentences but are still hard to follow.
- ✓ Children whose teacher, cousins or shopkeepers ask them to repeat themselves all day.
- ✓ Parents who want easy things to fold into everyday play and routines.
- ✓ Families waiting for, or already attending, speech therapy who want to help at home.

Important – when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

Your child has no clear words at all, or is very hard to understand even for you.

Speech comes out in a groping, effortful or inconsistent way — the same word sounds different each time, which can point to **apraxia of speech**.

Your child used to say words clearly and now says fewer or less clear words (regression).

Speech sounds very nasal, or air seems to escape down the nose on sounds like p, b and s — ask your child's doctor to look at this.

People outside the family still cannot follow your four-year-old, or the early, easy sounds (p, b, m, n, t, d) are still wrong past three.

Your child gets very frustrated, upset or gives up when they are not understood.

You have a gut feeling that something is not right — always trust it and ask for help.

Getting help where you live

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local to you:

Work with us online, from anywhere. We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search **“child speech & language therapist near me”**, or ask your doctor for a referral.

Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here.**

☆ Your step-by-step roadmap

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

Week 1 – Really listen and tune in

Notice which sounds your child finds tricky.

For a few days, quietly jot down the sounds your child misses, swaps or drops off the ends of words.

Note whether the same word comes out the same way every time, or differently each time — a therapist will want to know.

Get down to their level and give them your whole attention when they talk.

Never make them say a word again and again — just show them you understood.

⚡ **Try** Keep a little “sound diary” in your phone notes — after a week you will **this:** start to spot the patterns, and it is the most useful thing you can bring to a first appointment. Our free **speech clarity check** is a quick way to see how those notes compare with the usual milestones.

Week 2 – Model, don't correct

Show the right sound without flagging the mistake.

When your child says “tar”, reply warmly “Yes — a car!” with a nice clear sound.

Slip the correct word into your reply once or twice, then move on. Twice is plenty; more turns it into a lesson.

Answer the meaning first — respond to what your child said before you think about any sound.

Keep your face and voice relaxed — you are showing, not testing.

 **Try** Think of yourself as a gentle echo that always sounds it out right — no **this:** fuss, no correction, no “say it properly”.

Week 3 – Play with one sound your child can nearly say

Choose a sound that is already close, not the hardest one.

Pick a sound your child sometimes gets right — that is the one ready to move, and it makes the first win quick.

Hunt out toys, names and everyday words that use it, and turn it into a game: “ssss” like a snake, “buh buh” for the bus. Our easy speech activities to do at home give you more ideas to borrow.

Leave r, th and blends like “spoon” and “tree” alone for now — those settle late in almost every child.

Praise every good go, even when it is not quite there yet.

 **Try** A sound learned through giggles sticks far better than one that has **this:** been drilled. Five minutes of play beats fifty minutes of practice.

Week 4 – Slow down and face to face

Give your child a clear model to see as well as hear.

Slow your own speech a little and say the key words clearly.

Get face to face and let your child watch your mouth as you make the sound.

Turn the television off — background noise hides exactly the detail your child is trying to copy.

Pause and give them time — do not jump in or finish their words for them.

 **Try** A calmer, slower pace from you invites a calmer, clearer try back
this: from them.

Week 5 – Move it into everyday talk

Carry the sound from practice into real conversation.

Weave the sound you have been practising into meals, bath time and getting dressed, where the same words come round every day.

Come back to the same simple books often, so favourite words keep cropping up.

Expect the sound to hold in short, familiar words long before it holds in fast chatter — that order is normal.

Notice and warmly mention any clearer word: “I heard that so clearly!”

 **Try** Everyday routines beat flashcards every time — the repetition just **this:** happens on its own. A new sound travels in this order, and the last step is always the slowest.

How a new sound travels

1

The sound on its own

“sss...” in front of a mirror

2

In a short, familiar word

“sun”, “sock”, “bus”

3

In a short phrase

“the sun is hot”

4

In everyday chat

at speed, with friends — this comes last

Home practice pays off most at steps 2 and 3.

Step 4 always takes the longest.



Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Never say “say it properly”, and never have your child repeat a word over and over.
- ✓ Cut the background noise — the TV off means your child can actually hear the sounds.

- ✓ Get face to face so they can watch how your mouth moves.
- ✓ Answer the meaning first — respond to what they said before you worry about any sound.
- ✓ Work on one sound at a time. Several at once is confusing for a young child.
- ✓ Keep it short and playful, and stop while it is still fun.
- ✓ Ask your child's doctor about a hearing check — clear hearing is the base for clear speech.

How you'll know it's working

- Fewer people are asking your child to repeat themselves.
- Your child lands a tricky sound clearly at least some of the time.
- Your child sometimes catches and fixes a sound without you saying anything — a very good sign.
- Strangers and teachers make out more of what your child says.
- Your child seems more confident, talks more and uses longer words instead of safe short ones.



Is this based on real methods? Speech sounds arrive in a broad developmental order rather than on fixed dates, and the norms described by bodies such as ASHA (the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association) are what this program follows: early sounds first, late sounds last, and no drilling of a sound a child is not ready for. Modelling the correct word back — rather than asking a child to repeat it — is standard speech and language therapy practice, and a Cochrane systematic review supports speech and language therapy for children with speech-sound difficulties. A home program supports that work; it is not an assessment and it does not replace one.

✔ **Educational information, not a diagnosis.** Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

— FAQ

Clearer Speech at Home: questions parents ask

