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## HELPFUL HINTS HANDOUT

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### HOME PROGRAM IDEAS & INFORMATION

Parents are an integral part of our therapy process. Since we only have a small portion of time with our clients each week, it is essential that parents do their part to encourage carryover of skills learned in sessions. Each week, we will provide information about the session regarding specific goals, successes and trouble spots. We would like parents to experiment with different types of homework and see what works best in your family dynamic.

One key ingredient to home therapy for children with a variety of speech and language goals is what we call “playing dumb.” By this we mean that parents need to try and “forget” what they understand their child to be telling them when it is unclear. This can be very difficult as families get busy and have other siblings to talk with as well. We talk with our clients about making new habits in their speech, and that is what we need parents to do as well. Taking some extra time to give feedback to your child when they are unclear can be very beneficial to their growing awareness of their speech and language. For example, your child is working on ending sounds and comes to you and says “ma pee”, and you know this to be “milk please.” Rather than quickly grab the milk and thank them for using good manners, take an extra moment to say “Hmmm, I’m not sure what that means, could you mean “I wanT milK pleaSE?” with exaggerated ending sounds. Then your child has the opportunity to say an improved version of his/her request using at least 1 new ending sound, after which you can grab the milk and praise them, “Hey that was a great ending sound!” Based on the weekly feedback you receive from your therapist, you will know what your child is capable of saying, and that will determine how much you can press them to try again if they do not use their good sounds or words on their own.

There are a variety of different ways to engage with your child and work on their speech goals at the same time. \*\* The big key here is that lots of positive reinforcement for their efforts will keep them trying their words even if they are hard. You know your child and how long they might stay attentive to you and the key is to keep them happy to be doing homework with you. Here are some ideas that families have found successful.

#### 1. **With picture sheets or word lists**

1. Use their favorite marker, pen, crayon, sticker or stamp to mark how many times they can say each word on their sheet.
2. If your child likes to color – you can control the colors and the time they get with each color. Parent holds the colors and the words, say target word, get a color for a certain amount of time (10 seconds for example), then time to change colors, start again...
3. Turn-taking games – for kids that will play card or board games with you or siblings – each player has to say a word (1 or more times) before they can take a turn. Parents and siblings

say their “words” too, this is added listening practice for clients and makes clients feel that all is equal when they play. The client can also select the words that each other player has to say and “tell them their word” and make sure the other players say it right too! Great ideas are Candyland, Chutes & Ladders, SORRY, Trouble, Go Fish, Old Maid, memory, Hi Ho CherryO, Hungry Hippos, etc....

4. Cut out each picture and glue onto construction paper around the edges – this can become a placemat or poster to put up different places. I've seen them on refrigerators, around the bath tub, on bedroom walls.
5. Reading time – have your child help you say the words that contain their homework words while you read. You can praise their reading as well as their speech!
6. Cut out pictures for a picture ring, or staple one corner as a small flip book – this is a more transportable option if you like to practice in the car or out places.
7. Make a binder of speech homework sheets (rewrite or use what you are given) and pick a sheet to practice every day – set a goal so they know how many times to practice (timer for 5 minutes, or 100 stars, etc.).
8. For kids that are resistant to practicing words with you – talk with them about how helpful it is to practice each day so that everyone understands them when they talk. Tell them that even if they don't want to practice their words, mom or dad (or sibling) will at least read the words to them for added listening practice.
9. If we email you a list of words -
  1. Kids love to see their name on the computer and the words that they've practiced are on there! If you like computer time, take those words and put them into a word processing sheet then add silly symbols next to them when they say them.
  2. Print them out and decorate the sheet as they practice.
  3. Send word lists to other family members kids may spend time with to reinforce practice in other settings.
2. Language concepts: verbs, prepositions, and other grammar
  1. Worksheets in these areas will typically have instructions on them for how to work with your child. Talk with your therapist about ideas for including grammatical help within your conversations – this is also a great time to “play dumb” and provide your child a good model of language when you model back what you “think” they meant to say/ask.

**\*\*\*\* The most effective way to help your child is in daily conversation when you can briefly stop them to repeat an incorrect word or 'play dumb' and see if they can slow down and try the word or sentence again with their good words. This takes practice in listening to your child and talking with your therapist to make sure you focus on current target words.**

**THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!**