



Speech and Language Therapy Service

VOICE CARE IN CHILDREN

1 LIMIT AMOUNT OF TALKING TIME

Your child should reduce the amount of talking time that is done, particularly when he/she has a cold or flu.

Schedule time regularly for quiet activities such as reading, colouring, watching TV etc.

Encourage your child to use a 'normal voice' but to reduce loudness. Discourage talking and yelling from room to room, up/down stairs etc. The child should walk to the other person.

2 DO NOT COMPETE VOCALLY WITH BACKGROUND NOISE

Encourage your child to not to 'talk over' other people, music, blaring TV, loud noise etc. He/she should wait his/her turn; turn the music, TV down etc.

3 AVOID USING STRAINED VOCAL PRODUCTIONS

Avoid the following incorrect uses of the voice:

- Shouting / cheering / screaming / raising voice
- Singing / humming (when your child has a voice problem)
- Whispering
- Your child should avoid straining the muscles of his/her face, neck, throat and shoulders, particularly when talking

4 AVOID EXCESSIVE COUGHING AND THROAT CLEARING

If your child indicates that his/her throat feels dry or tickly or as if 'there is something there' which needs to be cleared, tell him/her not to cough or clear their throat. Encourage him/her to swallow instead and to drink plenty of fluids – especially water and water based drinks e.g. diluted juices.

Throat lozenges or sprays which contain local anaesthetics should not be given as these reduce pain and hide the presence of the problem.

5 IRRITANTS

The following should be reduced or avoided where possible as they can irritate the vocal cords and may lead to coughing and/or throat clearing:

- Smokey atmospheres
- Excessively dry/dusty environments
- Hot or spicy foods
- Antihistamines used in treatment of hay fever
- Cough suppressants
- Caffeine (in tea, coffee or coke)
- Strongly perfumed aerosols e.g. hairspray, air-fresheners, deodorants etc.

REMEMBER

Your child will copy you so most of the points should also be followed by you and not your child alone.