



## Supporting Your Child's Delayed Speech Skills

- Try to focus on the content of the message your child is giving rather than its presentation.
- If you don't understand what your child has said, ask for a repetition. If you still don't understand, ask him to show you what he means.
- Take responsibility for when communication goes wrong - explain that you were not listening, so could he say it again.
- Help build your child's confidence in his communication skills by praising him regularly for his good talking.
- Communication is most successful when the topics being discussed revolve around the here and now or are familiar and predictable for your child. Your child is more likely to be able to take part in these situations and conversations with confidence, especially if strangers who aren't familiar with your child's speech are present.
- Model the correct production of words rather than correct your child's speech errors – this means repeat the target word, but only after your child has finished his sentence.
- Emphasise the importance of the word or sound in question by using changes in the pitch and volume of your voice, or by lengthening the sound e.g. "yes, I made you sssssoup!".
- Don't forget that his communication message is more important than how he says particular words – don't forget to acknowledge and respond to what the message was!
- Use "special time" to read a book or play an activity together for 10 minutes each day. Use this time to stimulate your child's developing listening and sound discrimination skills. Do this by focussing on 1 target sound at a time. Use the book, pictures, toys etc. as an opportunity for "auditory bombardment" – this means lots of repetition, and talking about words and pictures that have your target sound in them! Don't forget to help make the target sound *salient* to your child by using changes in the volume, pitch and length of sounds!