

Oral-Motor Exercises 2

Fun at Snack Time

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There are lots of oral motor exercises which help children develop the muscle tone and coordination needed to make speech sounds. Snack time is an excellent time to improve oral motor skills. Try some of these parent directed activities. Say and do the following with your child:

- Hold a thin pretzel stick or cracker in your lips. Now hold a fat pretzel stick in your lips. *"Can you hold it while I count to five?"*
- Bite small pieces from a large cracker or a long pretzel stick. Parents cut food into small pieces to prevent choking. However, it is very important that toddlers learn to bite small pieces from a larger snack. Supervise to prevent mouth stuffing.
- Take tiny bites of a pretzel stick. Try this with the pretzel stick in different places to practice biting with different teeth. Hold it at the center of your mouth to use your front teeth. Hold it at the corner of your teeth to use your side and back teeth.
- Drink from a variety of cups. Try a different cup, mug, or glass every day. Attention parents: Sip cups with lids are wonderful when you don't want a drink to spill. However, it is very important that toddlers drink from regular cups every day to develop oral motor skills necessary for speech sound production.
- Lick foods, such as pudding or yogurt, from your lips.
- Hold a popsicle or lollipop about an inch in front of your mouth and stretch out your tongue to lick it.
- Drink through a straw.
- Drink a thicker liquid, such as a milkshake, through a straw.
- Blow on warm foods.

Eat different textures every day.

Smooth (pudding, applesauce)
Crunchy (crackers, pretzels)
Chewy (raisins, fruit snacks)
Lumpy (yogurt with fruit)

