

Oral-Motor Exercises 3

Watch What My Mouth Can Do!

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We exercise to develop our arms and legs but don't think about building up muscle tone in our lips, cheeks, jaw, and tongue. By strengthening the muscles in our mouth and face, we develop the coordination needed for producing sounds and words.

Try these fun activities with your child to help develop oral motor skills. Remember, avoid small items that may be a choking hazard, and supervise these activities closely.

- Blow bubbles with your child. When introduced to bubble blowing, children may not initially have the breath support to blow a bubble through the wand. If someone catches a bubble, it is easier to blow it off the wand. As the bubble floats down, blow it back up again. Pop a bubble with your tongue.
- Blow horns, whistles, noisemakers, harmonicas, and party favors.
- Blow feathers and cotton balls. Turn a paper cup over and place a cotton ball on top. Blow it off.
- Blow through a straw. Now move a cotton ball across the table by blowing through the straw. You and your child can have a race.
- Make popping sounds with your lips ("puh-puh-puh"). Try and move the cotton ball with these sounds.
- Blow kisses.
- Kiss the mirror to make a lip print.
- Fill your cheeks up with air.
- Wash your own face with a warm wash cloth. Massage those cheeks and lips!
- Make motor noises with toy cars and trucks – "Brrrrrm!" (Attention parents: Motor noises that vibrate the lips are good oral motor practice. Avoid harsh, growling noises from the throat. These abuse the vocal cords.)