

May is Speech and Hearing Month



Preschool Hotline Newsletter

Spring 2019 Edition

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• Sun! Warm Weather! Spring, Summer! Outdoors! Outside voices! Outside voices?

• Have you used that phrase “use your inside voice. Outside voices are for outside” But wait, aren’t outside voices really loud and... well... really loud??

• Those loud voices that our little ones are using can sometimes be very hard on their vocal folds. Find, in this edition, an article written by our Prince George based University of Alberta Speech and Language student on how to help our children keep a strong and healthy voice

• And as you move your fun times to the outdoors, don’t forget that outdoor fun is just as good a time to promote language as inside activities. We have included some simple outdoor fun along with ideas of the language you can be using and modelling for

your little people. And just in case winter was too long, and you have forgotten all that can be done outside, we have also included a list of fun summer activities.

Please connect with your local Speech-Language Pathologist if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child’s speech or language development. Or look for us in Programs under Services at northernhealth.ca

Enjoy your warm weather fun!

**Your Northern Health
Community Speech &
Language team**


northern health
the northern way of caring

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Vocal Hygiene

Danica Berthelsen, U of A Speech & Language graduate student

Parents do a lot to make sure they are raising healthy and active kids. Sometimes all that activity can be **LOUD** and may be hard on your child's vocal folds. Here are some simple tips to help keep your child's voice strong and healthy too!

1. Stay hydrated!

Our vocal folds need to be hydrated in order to perform in a healthy way. Dry vocal folds can change the quality of our voice. Drinking water helps maintain a healthy voice. Remember, many colas and chocolate contain caffeine that can cause dehydration -- try to avoid or limit the intake of these items in order to promote your child's healthiest voice.



2. Take a break

Prolonged overuse of your voice, including talking, singing, yelling, chronic coughing and throat clearing can change the pattern in which your vocal folds vibrate. This can cause nodules, polyps or cysts which are growths on the vocal folds. Help your child to understand when their voice hurts or feels dry, that their voice is likely tired and needs water and rest.

3. Turn down the volume

If you find yourself shouting to be heard, consider adjusting the environment. When there's a lot of background noise, we automatically speak more loudly. Turn down competing sound sources, including the music, the TV, or the volume of your voice!

****Fun Fact**** whispering is actually harder on our voices than just talking quietly! If you're trying to maintain a healthy voice, avoid prolonged whispering.

4. Encourage "inside voices" and turn taking during conversations

Model conversational turn taking with your child to avoid talking over others. Not only does this teach helpful social skills, but your voice will thank you too!

5. Be aware of your environment and avoid irritants such as smoking

Both direct and secondhand smoke inhalation can cause dehydration and damage to our vocal folds, lungs and mouth. Avoid exposure to these environmental irritants to protect your voice and overall health.

Outdoor Language Fun!

The weather is getting warmer and the days are becoming longer. No one wants to stay inside and all your kids want to do is play outdoors. Being outside is not only good for health and well-being, but for speech and language, too. Outside activities are perfect for teaching your kids new words in fun ways, bonding, and having good-quality interactions. Below are some ideas on how to incorporate language and speech into exciting activities with your kids:

1. The Park: One of the best outdoor areas for speech and language learning is the park. It's full of fun play equipment and opportunities for high-energy games. Model action and describing words while you play on the swings, the monkey bars, the roundabout and the slide like:

- Swing, climb, hang, slide, spin, go, stop, push, throw, dig, etc.
- Fast, slow, high, low, dizzy, tired, messy, fun, etc.

2. Walks: Walks, especially walks in nature, allow your kids to experience the world using all of their senses, to breathe fresh air, and get good exercise. While walking, talk to your child about the things you see, where you're going, where you've been, what smells are in the air, and what things feel like. You can also play a game of "I Spy."

3. Scavenger Hunt/Hide and Seek: Scavenger hunts and hide and seek are perfect for modelling location and describing words. Talk to your child about where you're looking for items/people, where items/people have been found, and where you are going to look next.

4. Physical Games and Sports: Games and sports have lots of action, describing, and location words that can be modelled. The possibilities are endless. For example:

- **Tag/Chase:** caught/catch, run, safe, in, out, etc.
- **Ball games:** throw, pass, bounce, win, kick, dribble, shoot, hit, high, low, etc.
- **Hopscotch:** jump, hop, numbers, throw, rest, turn, land, in, on, etc.

Teaching speech and language skills doesn't have to be boring or done inside at a table. Modelling new words and talking can be added to any outdoor activity you're doing with your kids. Remember, one of the best ways to help your kids' language and speech development is to model lots of words in everyday and fun activities.



Summer Fun, Here We Come!

Activities for Kids Who Love to Go:

1. Go camping. Front yard, back yard, in the living room, or make it a weekend trip in another town.
2. Go to your local recreation center in your city and see what activities or classes they offer for super cheap!
3. Go to the park – play in the playground then take a nature walk on the trails
4. Go on a worm hunt.
5. Go fishing.
6. Go rock hunting
7. Go to your local home supply store or craft store and see if they are offering any free children's clinics this summer.
8. Go walk at the mall.
9. Go to the lake - swim or fish.
10. Go to the local sno cone or ice cream stand.
11. Go to your local kid's fairs
12. Go to your local farmer's markets
13. Go to your local Canada Day celebrations and watch the fireworks

Activities for Kids Who Love to Play and Do:

1. Skip rocks. Simple, free and fun
2. Have a bike parade.
3. Fly a kite.
4. Feed the ducks.
5. Have a picnic at the park, in your living room, or in your front yard.
6. Visit the nearest beach.
7. Play in the water (sprinkler, slip and slide, kiddy pool, water balloons)
8. Play frisbee.
9. Volunteer somewhere as a family.
10. Have a scavenger hunt.
11. Play kickball.
12. Play tug-of-war.
13. Put a puzzle together as a family.
14. Play hide and go seek in the dark.
15. Build a clubhouse or a fort.
16. Plant something.
17. Play dress up.
18. Paint Rocks

