

ORAL-MOTOR THERAPY

Oral-motor therapy (mouth movement therapy) is a set of techniques to improve movements of the jaw, lips and tongue in order to facilitate improved speech and eating skills. "Mouth movement" therapy is a means towards better speech, eating and mouth control.

Suck develops respiration, i.e., strength and duration

- use straws (sports bottles, cup with lid and straw)
- thicker liquids such as slushies, milk shakes, apple sauce with fruit juices. Strong citrus and sour flavours (cranberry combinations like cran-raspberry, lemonade, etc.) encourage strong sucking as well as pieces of finger foods/treats with grapefruit, melon, oranges, Kiwi fruit.

Blow (with good tongue and lip seal) also develops respiratory control. Whistles open vocal cords, kazoo's create vocal folds closure. Both suck and blow open up the chest and develop depth and length of breath. See toy examples attached.

Bite helps stabilize and increase jaw, neck, shoulder and pelvis stability.

Examples: wash cloth, tubing, licorice, beef jerky, friot leather

Crunch promotes jaw mobility and rotary chewing: crackers, chips especially if salty. Cheeks, sides/front of tongue are stimulated.

Chew: Food textures develop strength of mouth muscles. Carrot sticks, fruit chewies, bread sticks, bagels, apples, pretzels, fruit, melon. Size can be graded, e.g., this pretzel to large pretzel.

Position:

Sitting: semi-reclined (pillows, inner tube or bean bag chair) during suck and blow activities if possible.

Standing: change position (in and out of gravity), e.g., climbing, wrestling, hammock swing, using a Hippy Hop.

Sound Play: sniffing, grunting, growling, barking or power sounds (car, airplane, motor boat), imitating vocalizations. This can be easily incorporated into imaginary play.

NOTE: Sweet foods will increase drooling.