

Making therapy fun!

Nobody wants to keep doing something they know they struggle with. Children are no different. Therapy and practise can take a while and we really need to keep the child motivated. It is important to keep sessions positive and fun. So when you are planning your sessions or thinking about how to help a child, remember to make sure it is fun! Before you start there are a few things you can do to get ready.

Set up your environment to make it as easy as possible for your child.

- Switch off the TV, radio or music. These things are highly engaging. Your child is unlikely to be able to focus on what you are asking them to do with the telly on in the background. This also includes your phone! We want your full attention on the child as well.
- Try to minimise distractions. e.g. keep siblings busy or get them to help, be in a quiet space as far as possible.
- Sit opposite your child. This really helps your child to watch you and also helps you to see what they are doing. Eye contact is important in therapy. See this link for more ideas of how to encourage eye contact. <https://speechbloguk.com/encouraging-eye-contact/>

Practise little and often

It is much better to do 5-10 minutes of focussed work several times a week, than an hour once a week with nothing in between.

Use rewards

Stickers, a tick on a chart, bubbles, a go on a favourite toy. Getting a reward for working hard really encourages your child to try hard again next time too.

Praise lots

Make sure you praise trying, not necessarily success. If your child is trying their best, tell them well done! We can't ask for any more!

Be excited yourself

Enjoy the games. If you seem to be having fun, your child is more likely to want to play the game with you.

Easy and hard

Try work that your child finds easier, as well as work they find tricky. It really helps your child's confidence if they get chances to try things they find easier too.

Using games

Whether you are practising a speech sound a new word or a sentence, try using a game to make it more fun. Most children's turn taking games can be used in therapy. The idea is that before anyone has a turn in the game, they have to make the sound/ say the word/ thinking of a sentence - whatever target you are working on.

One thing to keep in mind is that the game is there to make it fun, but shouldn't take away from the actual practise!

We all know about pop-up-pirate and connect four, but there are lots of other games you can play. For some more ideas about games to use in therapy, read this <https://speechbloguk.com/top-10-games-for-a-travelling-therapist/>

So remember to enjoy the work and keep it fun!

