

# Handy Handouts®

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## Stimulability for Speech Sounds

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### What Is Articulation Stimulability?

*Articulation* is the production of speech sounds. When children mispronounce or omit (leave out) speech sounds, a speech-language pathologist (SLP) can test *stimulability* for the sounds in error. *Articulation stimulability* refers to testing whether a child can *imitate* correct production of a speech sound. If a child can correctly imitate a sound, we say he/she is *stimulable* for that sound. This means that the sound will likely develop to correct production without direct intervention. If a child cannot correctly imitate a sound, we say that he/she is *not stimulable* for that sound. In this case, direct intervention services with the SLP may be required. Direct intervention will help the child learn and practice correct production of the misarticulated or omitted sounds.

### How Does an SLP Assess Stimulability?

To test stimulability, an SLP uses repetition tasks where he/she says the sound correctly and asks the child to repeat the sound. This assessment may include several attempts by the child as he/she tries to correctly say the sound. The SLP may encourage correct production with simple suggestions for how to produce the sounds, such as playing a "Say it just like me" game or giving cues like "Put your teeth together and say 's.'" It is very important for the child's attention to be focused on this task. If the child is not focused to the therapist and the activity, there is a tendency for the child to continue making errors in sound production. Below are some general guidelines for testing stimulability.



### Some general guidelines for testing stimulability



- Find a quiet place with minimal distractions to enhance the child's ability to focus.



- Identify the targeted error sounds. Keep in mind that if a child can correctly produce the sound in isolation (by itself), in syllables, or at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, then stimulability testing is not needed.



- Present each sound in isolation, syllables, and/or words with clear articulation.
- Record the child's correct/incorrect sound productions.



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If a child does not provide a response, continue by saying “Listen again, and say what I say.” If the child does not provide a response at that time, simply record a “No Response” for that item and continue with the assessment. The SLP will then review the results and determine if therapy interventions are appropriate. The SLP will consider different factors including the child’s chronological age, type and severity of articulation errors, and any qualifying criteria for the speech program. The SLP and parent will work together to establish target goals and expectations.

## Target Practice at Home

Children can practice saying sounds with a variety of activities in the home. Be sure to check with your child’s SLP for the specific sounds to target as well as some engaging ways to work on those sounds. Your SLP can provide guidance as to the specific needs of your child. See the activities below for some fun examples!



### Target Examples:



- Practice saying the sound \_\_\_ when naming items around the house.
- Practice saying the sound \_\_\_ while cleaning your room/picking up toys.
- Practice saying the sound \_\_\_ for five minutes while riding in the car.
- Practice saying the sound \_\_\_ while getting dressed for school.
- Practice saying the sound \_\_\_ with a brother/sister for five minutes.
- Practice saying the sound \_\_\_ during commercials of one TV show.

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