



The 'F' Sound

Welcome to 'f' practice! We believe that parents and caregivers are a child's best teacher and there are many things that you can do at home to improve your child's communication skills.

Developmental Norms:

Most¹ children produce the 'f' sound correctly by 4 years of age in initial, medial, and final position of words.

1 Age at which at least 90% of children produced the sound correctly in all word positions. (Adapted norms from The Goldman Fristoe Test of Articulation-2)

Position:

- *Initial position of words (the sound occurs at the beginning of the word): **fit, feel, phone, follow***
- *Medial position of words (the sound occurs in the middle of the word): **elephant, muffin, coffee, buffalo***
- *Final position of words (the sound occurs at the end of the word): **knife, roof, chef, laugh***

How to make the “f” sound:

- The top teeth are placed lightly on the bottom lip.
- Air is pushed out the mouth while the teeth and lips stay in position.
- The voice is turned off.

[Click to watch on YouTube: Demonstration of how to produce 'F'](#)



How to provide feedback for /f/:

BE SPECIFIC!

When the sound was produced correctly: “That was a great ‘f’ sound!” OR “I really heard your ‘f’ sound when you said ‘fast.’ Great job!”

When the sound was produced incorrectly: “Oops! You forgot the ‘f’ sound,” OR “That sound like you said ‘barm’ instead of ‘farm.’ Remember to use your ‘f’ sound.”

You can give the sound a fun name. For example, the /f/ sound could be called the "angry cat sound". Feel free to get creative and find a name for the sound that works best for your child!



How often should I be practicing with my child?

A useful analogy is to compare working on speech sounds to playing a video game. In many video games, there are different levels that need to be completed or mastered in a sequence.

The length of time a child stays on one level varies greatly from child to child, and can be impacted by a number of factors. These factors include:

- The amount of cueing needed to elicit the sound correctly - we call this *stimulability*. If a child can produce a sound given proper cueing techniques, they are said to be stimuable to produce that sound. Gradually, over time, we can fade the cues so that the child can make the sound by themselves.
- Attention span: A child who is able to focus on practicing his or her speech sound, pay attention to the cues given, and pay attention to their own production is likely to make progress more quickly than a child who might struggle with attention and focus.



If you feel that your child is not making progress as expected, please contact your school speech-language pathologist for more guidance in this area.

How to Master a Level?

For most 'levels', your child will be ready to move on once he or she is able to produce the sound at that level with 80% accuracy. You don't need to keep track of how your child is doing on each task unless you want to. You can simply estimate approximately how well your child is doing. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your school's speech-language pathologist.

Reps: 1 – 2 Activities/Practice sessions per day

Duration: 5 – 15 minutes

Levels:

- Level One: Isolation (e.g. the sound all by itself: 'f')
- Level Two: Syllable (e.g. 'fo')
- Level Three: Word (e.g. 'fast')
- Level Four: Phrase (e.g. 'big farm')
- Level Five: Sentence (e.g. 'you have long fingers')
- Level Six: Conversation (e.g. the sound in everyday conversation)

Why Practice? It's Like Exercise!

Think of practicing speech sounds as similar to exercising or lifting weights. If you start off by learning correct form, exercising every day, and gradually increasing the difficulty or weight, you will be able to make great progress towards your fitness goal! The same goes for working on speech sounds. We start by showing a child how to properly produce the sound. Then, we work with the child on saying the sound on its own (isolation), then in syllables (la, lee, lie, low, Lou). After that, we target the sound at the word level- beginning, end, middle, and in consonant blends. Gradually, we move to producing the sound at the sentence level, and then at the conversational level.



Short But Often!

Researchers have found that shorter but more frequent practice sessions are **more effective** than longer but less frequent sessions. For this reason, I recommend that you try to sneak in as many short sessions as you can throughout your week. The more you practice, the faster your child will progress. A few 5-minute sessions a day is a great place to start, but you can always do fewer if it doesn't fit into your schedule. Try practicing while driving in the car, while standing in line, or while waiting for a doctor's appointment to get in a few extra repetitions.

Phonological Processes for /f/:

A *phonological process* is a typical error pattern that young children use to simplify an adult speech sound they are not able to say. In the case of the /f/ sound, one error that children may exhibit is called *stopping*. In this error pattern, the child substitutes a stop consonant that has no airflow, such as /b/ or /p/, for the /f/ sound, which needs to be made with continuous airflow. When they do this they say "bunny" or "punny" for "funny", "bish" or "pish" for "fish", and "knipe" for "knife".

Stopping is not an error pattern that babies and young children demonstrate during typical development, and it is a red flag for an articulation disorder. The earlier parents work with their children to modify their stopping, the less likely it is that this error pattern will become habituated and require speech therapy.

Tips for working on stopping at home:

Be Specific: tell your children that they are stopping their air instead of letting their air flow out of their mouth to make the /f/ sound.



Give an Example: give your children examples of their errors (e.g. "You said bat when you meant to say fat").

Provide a Model: have your child look closely at your mouth as you model the /f/ sound all by itself, not in a word, and talk about how you need to put your top teeth on your bottom lip and blow out air to make the /f/ sound.

Use a Tactile Aid: run your finger down your child's arm when you stretch out the /f/ sound, and then tap your finger on your child's arm when you make the /b/ sound so he can feel the difference between a stop sound and one that is made with continuous airflow.

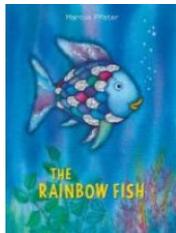
Blow Up the Balloon: pretend you are blowing up a balloon as you slowly say "ffffff" several times in a row. Really stretch out the /f/ sound to emphasize the concept of continuous airflow.

Learning with Games

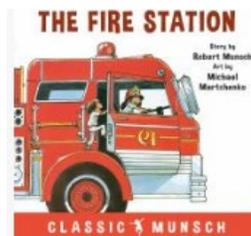
- **Play Go Fish!** Encourage your child to use their good 'f' sound in the repetitive phrase, "Go fish!". For even more practice, use 'f' picture cards.
- **Scavenger Hunt!** Go on a scavenger hunt and search for 'f' items around the house. Encourage your child to use the phrase, "I found ___!"
- **Connect 4!** Play Connect 4 or any other favourite board game. Before each turn, each person has to name a picture card with the 'f' sound and/or make up a sentence using that target word. Some other games that we commonly use during therapy are: Chutes and Ladders, Don't Spill the Beans, Don't Break the Ice, and Kerplunk.
- **Fire Trucks:** Pretend to be fire fighters and put out fires around the house! Use repetitive phrases such as "I can fight the fire!", "I put out the fire!"

Sound-Loaded Books: F

(Click the book to view to open a library search)



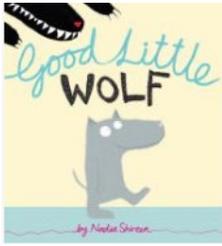
The Rainbow Fish



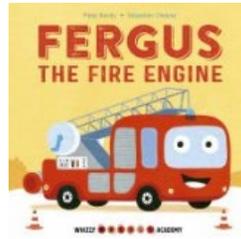
The Fire Station



Three Little Pigs



Good Little Wolf



Fergus the Fire Engine



FARM

Helpful Websites

- [Practical Speech Therapy Activities for Home Practice](#)
- [Working Speech and Language into Daily Routines](#)
- [Fun Family Crafts](#)
- [Printables for Kids: KizClub](#)

Songs Featuring 'F'

- [YouTube: The Farmer in the Dell](#)
- [YouTube: Old MacDonald Had A Farm](#)
- [YouTube: London Bridge is Falling Down](#)
- [YouTube: How Far I'll Go \(from Disney's Moana\)](#)
- [YouTube: Pinkfong "F" Song](#)

F Crafts

- [Family House](#)
- [Finger Paint Fish](#)
- [Paper Plate Wolf](#)