

The Use of Bubbles in Speech Therapy

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Let's talk bubbles. As an SLP, bubbles are a must. I've never met a kid whose eyes don't light up when they see bubbles floating through the air! This simple soapy mixture can provide hours of fun and the speech and language concepts you can target are endless! Below are listed just a few skills that can be targeted with bubbles at home! If your child is working on a skill not listed below, ask your SLP for help, I am sure they have got a few bubble tricks up their sleeves!

Preverbal Skills:

Before kids verbally request, they often request through gestures, sign language, and eye contact. Bubbles are an interactive and easy way to practice these early joint attention skills at home! Start by engaging your child with bubbles by blowing a few rounds and then stop and watch what your child does. Once your child realizes that the bubbles have stopped, wait until they look at you. Them looking at you indicates that they know you are the one providing the bubbles and that they have to let you know somehow that they want more bubbles. As soon as your child looks at you, gestures with their arm, grunts, etc., you can praise them by saying "great job, you told me that you want more bubbles!" You can also start teaching your child simple signs. Two easy signs to target with bubbles are 'more' and 'go'. If you are not sure what the signs are for these two words a quick internet search will provide you with a visual. Your child may require some hand over hand modeling of the signs to start with, but the end goal would be to have your child request for you to blow the bubbles (go), and request (more) bubbles.

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Language Skills:

Similar to the preverbal skills, bubbles can also be used to work on verbally requesting and language expansion. You can start by having your child request using one word, "bubbles" and then try to build upon that. This is called language expansion. If your child says "bubbles", you can model "more bubbles" or "pop bubbles". Language expansion is a great strategy to use to help teach your child all the different ways they can use a word and expand their overall vocabulary. Other phrases that can be targeted include, "big bubble", "small bubble", "blow bubble", "want bubble", "up up up", "go bubble", "bye bubble". The phrases are endless, get creative!

Speech Sounds:

Bubbles are also great when targeting some early developing sounds such as /b/, /p/, and /m/. All of these sounds are made by putting both of your lips together, which makes them very easy for you to model for your child to see. Repetitive practice of the words "bubble", "pop", and "more" while playing bubbles is a great way to sneak in some home programming that every SLP loves to hear about!

Turn Taking:

For kids that are working on social skills bubbles provide a great way to practice taking turns. What kid does not love to be the one blowing the bubbles? Well, now you can make it therapeutic! This one is quite self-explanatory, you blow the bubbles once or twice, prompt your child to ask for a turn, they blow the bubbles a few times, then you request another turn! When targeting turn taking, I find that it often helps when I present it in a question, "whose turn is it now?" You can also throw in some gestures, pointing to either yourself or your child to help them remember whose turn it is. The goal would be to fade all of those prompts and have your child independently state whose turn it is!

