

THE CENTER FOR SPEECH EXCELLENCE

Articulation

Definition: The process of producing and using the speech sounds in a language is called articulation. Placement of the articulators (lips, teeth, tongue, throat, and nose) and the way air goes through them makes a difference as to the sound that comes out. Since different sounds have different meanings, the meaning of the word may be changed by changing the sounds. For example, pat becomes bat just by exchanging one sound. In disordered articulation, sounds may be substituted, omitted, or distorted. We must also look at phonological (sound) patterns where the same type of error is made for different sounds in a group. (Please see the fact sheet on phonology) When these changes are found, there can be mild to severe problems understanding the speech.

Characteristics:

Persons who have disordered articulation may:

- Substitute sounds. Example: baf for bath
- Omit sounds. Example: ca for cat. This becomes a larger problem a sentence context. "The cat sat on the hat" becomes "The ca' sa' o' the ha'."
- Distort sounds. Example: The s sound with air coming out the sides of the mouth instead of the front.
- Produce sounds correctly in isolation, but not in combination with other sounds. Also sounds which are produced correctly in words may be incorrectly pronounced in sentences.
- Need to correct sounds that should have been mastered by a certain age. All sounds should be fairly clear by the time the child enters school.

Assistance

We can offer the following assistance:

- Evaluation of articulation errors in single word and connected speech contexts.
- Written report of scores, judgment of age-appropriateness, judgment of readiness for correcting error sounds, and a plan for treatment.
- Consult with physician, family, teachers, day care providers, or others.
- Therapy to improve articulation skills.

Compiled by Susan E. Hance, M.S., CCC-SLP, © 1992

Pamela H. Bashor and Associates

Speech and Hearing Building, Suite 202, 320 Lillington Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28204, 704/375-5231