

## Early Years Service

We work with children under 5 living in Hackney who have difficulties with:

- Understanding language and following instructions
- Using words and sentences
- Communicating and playing with their friends and family
- Hearing, listening & attention
- Pronouncing words & sounds
- Stammering or stuttering
- Eating and drinking

Children who are in Hackney schools are seen by their school's link Speech and Language therapist and can be referred via the school's SENCO.

## How we work

We work with children and their parents at home, in Children's Centres or in their nursery / playgroups – whichever is best for the child and family.

We work together with lots of other people, including teachers, Health Visitors and Early Support Workers.

## Contact details

**Speech and Language Therapy**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 6 Orsman Road  
London N1 5QJ  
Tel: 020 7683 4262  
[hello@gethackneytalking.co.uk](mailto:hello@gethackneytalking.co.uk)  
[www.gethackneytalking.co.uk](http://www.gethackneytalking.co.uk)

# Voice Care

## Parent information leaflet



“The advice about looking after my child’s voice made a real difference and he enjoyed coming to the sessions.”

Parent of child seen for voice therapy

# Encouraging healthy voice

Helping your child to look after their voice.

## Why is voice care important?

Children use their voices in lots of different ways throughout the day so it is important to use the voice correctly.

### How do we produce voice?

The vocal folds are small and delicate cords in the voice box which vibrate together very quickly using air from the lungs. This produces sound which the mouth and tongue use to shape into voice.

If this vibration is too forced, the folds become strained and damaged. This can also happen if the voice is not rested or it has been used for a long time.

## Signs of unhealthy use

Voice damage often means swelling of the vocal folds (laryngitis) or small growths on the vocal folds (nodules or polyps).

### What may the signs be?

- Hoarseness/gruffness
- Complaints of a “scratchy” or sore throat
- Breathy, airy speech
- High/low pitched voice

If you notice any of these signs in your child and they persist for 3 months, talk to your GP or Speech and Language Therapist. They can refer your child to see an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist (ENT) if necessary.

## Top Tips for Voice Care

- **Encourage a quieter voice and reduce background noise** if your child uses a loud speaking voice.
- **Use a quiet voice** when you speak to help reduce your child’s volume. **Avoid whispering** as this can tire the vocal folds.
- **Encourage turn taking in conversation.** This can reduce ‘competition’ for talking time and help reduce your child’s need to strain their voice.
- **Encourage your child to move closer to the person they want to talk to,** rather than calling upstairs/to another room.
- **Talk about ways of getting the attention of others** e.g. raising their hand/waving.
- **Encourage plenty of voice rest** especially after of singing, long conversations or reading aloud.
- **Encourage quiet activities** where your child does not need to use their voice.
- **Encourage your child to drink plenty of water** to keep the vocal folds moist and hydrated (1-1.5 litres recommended). Limit intake of drinks containing caffeine (e.g. fizzy drinks) as this has a drying effect on the vocal folds.
- **Keep the air in your home healthy** e.g. open windows/remove dust.

