

## ORAL MOTOR PLAY IDEAS

These fun exercises are designed for you to give your child a variety of oral motor experiences in an enjoyable way. Show your child how to do these through modeling and encouraging your child to imitate you. Make sure that you exaggerate your mouth movements so that your child can see how your lips, tongue, jaw, and cheeks are moving.

They can do these in front of a mirror at home, in the bathtub, or even while in the car.

**Remember that the goal is to practice the skill, do not worry about manners.**

Do these exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times per day for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes each time; once a day with food and at least once a day without food.

### 1. Blowing

- Dandelions that have gone to seed
- Cotton, dry corn meal, feathers or lightweight objects across the table
- Blow Kleenex in the air
- Bubbles from bubble wand, or blowing bubbles off your hand in the bath
- Whistles, pinwheels, party horns
- Blow bubbles with liquid through a straw to make froth or bubbles
- Blowing up a balloon (can blow up partially if it's too difficult)

### 2. Chewing/ Jaw Strength

- Tug of war with licorice or rubber tubes. You can playfully pull on it as child clenches jaw like a tiger or puppy (your child can pull on your licorice while you clench too)
- Make teeth marks with the indentation of your front teeth and back teeth on beef jerky, carrot, jicama, dried fruit, harder licorice
- Fruit roll-ups, fruit leather, fruit chews, gummi worms, gum, taffy

### 3. Tongue Movement

- Licking popsicles, suckers, ice cream cones
- Lick food out of a bowl like a puppy
- Lick something sticky off a spoon (peanut butter, honey, etc)
- Lick off something sticky from top lip, bottom lip, or corners of the mouth
- Pretend to be like a kitty and lick paws
- Clicking your tongue
- Singing "la la la" to music
- Blowing "raspberries" with tongue
- Use tongue to brush along your teeth
- "Sweep the House" – use tongue to "sweep" the "floor" of your mouth, space between cheek and teeth ("walls"), and to sweep the top of your mouth (ceiling)
- Move tongue to touch the corners of mouth while making silly faces
- Balance a Cheerio or small piece of food on tongue, then stick tongue in and out of mouth to play hide-n-seek or peek-a-boo
- Paint tongue with a dark colored sucker (try to have your child paint the back of the tongue if she/he can tolerate it)
- Lay a mini-Goldfish cracker flat on the tip of your tongue. Using a tongue tip lateralization, stand the Goldfish on its' tail or nose on your very last molars

#### 4. Lips (do in front of a mirror)

- Hold Cheerio in lips like a whistle “puckering lips”
- Tightly seal lips to say “mmmmm”
- Lips tightly sealed around straw, kazoo, or whistle
- Put on lipstick or chapstick with purees (ranch dressing, applesauce) and pucker to make kisses on the table or on a mirror. Child can also lick puree off lips using tongue only
- Lips tightly sealed to hold paper or object between lips
- Hold a food (pretzel rods or licorice) in lips without using your hands to hold the food – hold your arms out and say “no hands”
- Humming
- Alternate puckering lips and smiling with one continuous movement (like saying o-e-o-e-o-e)

#### 5. Sucking

- Straws with thick milkshake or thicker liquid like a nectar to strengthen suck
- Make a “fish face” and suck in your cheeks
- Hold a napkin on the bottom of a straw using only suction

#### 6. Desensitizing Teeth

- Use a vibrating toothbrush
- Count your teeth in front of a mirror using a toothbrush or with a long food item
- Brush your teeth with a carrot, beef jerky, etc. (Hard Munchables) while talking and brushing over your “strong back teeth”
- Make music by tapping Hard Munchables in between your top and lower teeth. You can then progress to tapping on your strong back teeth
- Have your child hold a vibrating toy on his/her cheek or in their mouth

*Remember, we want your child to be happy doing these exercises while imitating you.*

*Don't do the exercises TO them – **Do the exercises WITH them and HAVE FUN!***

Compiled Originally by:  
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