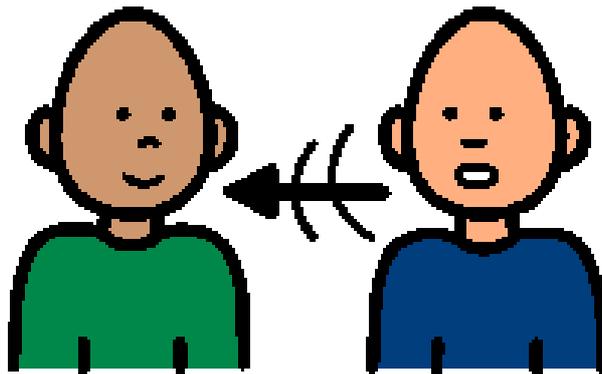




children's speech and language therapy service

## General advice on managing voice problems in children



With all of us in mind

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**Children's speech and language therapy**

The Lodge, Kendray Hospital, Doncaster Rd, Barnsley, S70 3RD  
Tel: 01226 644331 Email: [swy-tr.barnsleyspeechtherapy@nhs.net](mailto:swy-tr.barnsleyspeechtherapy@nhs.net)  
Website: [www.barnsleyspeechtherapy.co.uk](http://www.barnsleyspeechtherapy.co.uk)





## Introduction

The vocal cords are in your throat. A child's vocal cords open and close more than 200 times every second when they are speaking. A voice can sound hoarse if:

- the vocal cords are drier than they should be
- they get banged together a lot due to coughing
- there is a lot of muscle tension in the neck and voice box

The voice gets hoarse because these things change how the vocal cords come together. Follow the advice below to help your child's voice.

## First Steps

- Does your child have a hearing problem? Get them checked out and follow advice.

## Environment

- Keep background noise low when playing or talking. Have no TV or radio times.
- Avoid dusty, dry or smoky places. Open windows, humidify rooms (e.g. put a bowl of water in your child's room).

## Practical things to do with your Child

- Encourage your child to drink lots of water.
- Help your child to stop coughing or clearing their throat - get them to sip or swallow water instead.
- Help your child to use less shouting or play noises - these can hurt their voice.
- Reduce sweets, sugary drinks and salty foods - like crisps.
- Avoid drinks that have caffeine in them - like tea, coffee and cola.
- Avoid **all** medicated throat sweets
- Reduce or avoid milk products. Keep milky drinks for bedtime if needed.
- Encourage some quiet time, such as watching TV or reading.
- Encourage relaxation - this helps to reduce tension and frustration.
- Help your child understand that they can help their voice by resting it.

## Information about shouting

When children shout they bang their vocal cords together harshly. This can cause a voice problem or make it worse.

- Encourage other ways of getting attention or showing anger and frustration.
- Remind them to go close to the person they're talking to, rather than shouting.
- Reduce background noise so they are not shouting over the top of noise.
- Help them reduce shouting in play by suggesting quieter games and activities.
- Look at what happens in your home. Make helpful changes. Use quieter voices.
- Encourage good turntaking in conversation rather than interrupting.



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## Above All

### Praise your child as much as possible for:

- Being quiet or playing quietly
- Taking positive action themselves like:
  - ✓ drinking lots of water
  - ✓ quietening down when their voice is bad

## The Success of Voice Therapy

You need to follow this advice to help your child's voice.  
Their voice problems may not get better if you do not follow this advice.  
You will need to make changes at home.  
If you cannot do this at the moment, then further appointments may not help.

## Comments about the Service

We like to hear your comments about what we do. Please let us know.  
You can contact Janet Whiting or Deborah Newman, Clinical Managers on:  
**01226 434248** - answer phone available.

For more advice about communication, speech, language, eating and drinking difficulties in children go to:

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists  
2 White Hart Yard, SE1 1NX.  
020 73781200  
[www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)

Talking Point  
[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

ICAN—helps children communicate  
4 Dyer's Buildings, Holborn, London, EC1N 2QP  
0845 225 4071  
[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

Afasic—Speech, Language and Communication  
1st Floor, 20 Bowling Green Lane, London, EC1ROBD  
0845 355577  
[www.afasic.org.uk](http://www.afasic.org.uk)



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