

# *Input modelling for young children*

## *Advice for parents*



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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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### **What is Input Modelling?**

Input Modelling is a therapy approach which was developed by a Speech and Language Therapist, Anne Harding-Bell. It was specifically developed to meet the needs of very young children with a cleft palate who may have difficulty with clear speech from an early age.

The therapy works by demonstrating to parents ways of repeating specific sounds to children in play activities. It is a multi-sensory approach, using vision, sound and touch. For instance, a child can see as you make the sound 'sh' with very rounded lips, can hear that it is a long, hissy sound and can feel the air on the back of their hand as you make it. By hearing, seeing and feeling sounds over and over again, the child is more likely to absorb them into their early sound patterns.

You may feel your child is too young to be starting speech therapy. However, the focus is very much on play and there is no expectation on the child to do or say anything at this stage. Instead, they are listening, watching and feeling as you model the sounds. In time, it is hoped that the child will consciously attempt to imitate your sounds, but this may take many months and is not a requirement of the therapy itself.

### **What will happen in Speech Therapy?**

A speech therapist will arrange the appointments for you. The number varies but is usually between 3 and 6. Each session lasts about 45 minutes and takes place in a speech therapy clinic, either individually or as part of a small group.

The therapist will have selected specific sounds for your child. Through playing with different toys, objects or pictures, the therapist will demonstrate to you how to model these sounds repeatedly using the multi-sensory approach. The therapist may make a short DVD recording of the session showing themselves working with your child. Watching this at home gives your child the chance to see and hear the sounds all over again, and can act as a reminder for you of the sort of activities to practise.

### **What do I do between speech therapy visits?**

Frequent repetition is key to the success of the therapy, so carrying out activities between visits is very important. Your therapist will give you ideas of different activities and recommend how often you should try to do these each day.

**The Spires Cleft Centre**  
[www.spirescentre.nhs.uk](http://www.spirescentre.nhs.uk)

Please contact one of the Specialist Speech and Language Therapists at The Spires Cleft Centre, Salisbury District Hospital on 01722 345571, or speak to your local speech and language therapist if you have further questions.