

Speech and Language Therapy Advice

DEVELOPING BREATH CONTROL

Breathing out is the power source for speech and it is important for children to be able to breath out easily and in a controlled manner for a reasonable length of time. Breath control difficulties are likely to be related to a motor difficulty and need to be approached with care and kindness. Keep your expectations reasonable, eg. you start with the target of blowing something easy for the count of 3. Targets that involve struggle will be de-motivating and may lead to other problems.

Some things are easier to blow than others, so be careful what you choose. Feathers move easily until they are wet, then they need a lot more puff. Start with things that move very easily.

EASY BLOWING GAMES

- Blow bubbles off the surface of soapy water or from your hand.
- Blow talcum powder off hands. Be careful that the child does not breathe in any powder whilst doing this.
- Blow over a floppy toy. There are lots of toys around that will fall over when you press the bottom. These can be a fun way to help a child who is finding blowing difficult, as you can control the toy's reaction.
- Blow feathers or tissue paper shapes/fish.
- Blow mobiles.
- Blow boats or plastic ducks on water.

HARDER BLOWING GAMES

- Blow Ping Pong Balls. You might start with a simple straight line and work towards getting the ball around a track. Blow football can be fun.
- Blow bubbles using a wand and bubble mixture. To make a big bubble the child will need to achieve a long, slow blow. Can they do this?
- Blow bubbles in water with straws. Start with thick straws as they are easier to blow through. Once the child will can blow reliably, have fun making bubble pictures by replacing the water with thin paint and putting a piece of paper over the top of the cup.
- Blow windmills and harder mobiles.

- Blow out candles – you can slowly increase the number.
- Blow paper horns, party whistles and other blowers.