

DISCOVER The Oral Placement Therapy.

TalkTools[®]



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Easy Steps limited registered in England and Wales with company No: 8193290

DISCOVER TalkTools: Supporting Your child's Development with Oral Placement Therapy (OPT)

Welcome to TalkTools - a leading approach to speech and language therapy designed to empower your child to communicate effectively and with confidence. If your child is facing speech and motor coordination difficulties, you're in the right place. Learn more about TalkTools and how it can make a difference in your child's life.

Oral Motor Deficits in Children

Oral motor deficits refer to impairments in the capacity to control mouth muscles, which subsequently affect essential functions such as speech and feeding. If your child is having trouble controlling his mouth muscles to talk and eat, and doesn't seem able to master chewing, blowing, or making specific sounds, he may have an oral motor disorder. The disorders can be categorised into three principal types:

Oral or Verbal Apraxia: This refers to motor planning difficulties - the inability to get the mouth to do what the brain tells it to do due to these difficulties.

Dysarthria: Characterised by muscle weakness or sluggishness which impacts feeding and speech.

Developmental Delay in Musculature: A lag in the development of muscles required for eating.

Why does a child experience oral motor deficit?

Oral motor disorders may arise from incorrect motor programming of the oral muscles. The brain may send a message to the oral muscles, but the muscles may either not

receive or misinterpret the instruction, resulting in incorrect or absent movements. Additionally, deficits in muscle memory can impair the automatization of these movements.

Low muscle tone in areas such as the lips, tongue, or jaw may also contribute. For example, children with low muscle tone in the jaw frequently have their mouths open, and those with weak lip muscles may struggle to drink from a straw, often losing control of liquids in the process of drinking.

Weak oral muscles may compromise a child's gag reflex or induce choking, thus leading to feeding disorders. Hence, strengthening the muscles and resetting the neural pathways is important in treating oral motor and feeding disorders.

Assessment

The therapy begins with a comprehensive assessment by a qualified speech-language therapist. This assessment involves evaluating the client's oral motor function and speech abilities.

- Checking for signs of weakness or low muscle tone in the lips, jaw, and tongue.
- Seeing how well the child can coordinate mouth movements by having him imitate non-speech actions such as opening the mouth, moving the tongue from side to side, smiling, frowning, puckering the lips.
- Evaluating the coordination and sequencing of muscle movements for speech while the child performs tasks such as the diadochokinetic rate, in which the child repeats strings of sounds such as ***puh-tuh-kuh***.
- Assessing the child's skills in social significant behaviours ('real-life' situations), such as blowing a candle, licking a lollipop etc.

Intervention

Based on the assessment findings, the speech therapist sets clear and individualized goals for the child. These goals are specific to the child's needs and may include improving articulation, speech clarity, or feeding. **Oral Placement Therapy** (OPT) involves a series of structured oral motor exercises and activities designed to target the identified weaknesses.

What is TalkTools | Oral Placement Therapy (OPT)?

Talk Tools | Oral Placement Therapy (OPT) is a specialized therapeutic approach used in speech and language therapy to address speech and feeding difficulties by focusing on the muscles and movements involved in oral motor function. It aims to enhance the coordination, strength, and flexibility of the lips, tongue, jaw, and related structures to improve speech clarity and feeding skills in individuals with various speech and motor disorders. OPT involves a range of exercises and activities tailored to the individual's needs, targeting specific oral structures and functions. For example, exercises may involve using a chewy tube to strengthen lip muscles for improved lip closure, or a straw hierarchy to enhance tongue control and coordination. OPT aims to improve speech clarity and feeding skills by building muscle strength, coordination, and sensory awareness in the oral cavity, making it particularly beneficial for clients with articulation disorders, apraxia of speech, dysphagia, sensory-motor issues, and other related challenges.

How does TalkTools | OPT work?

OPT is a highly individualized and evidence-based, multi-sensory approach. Oral Placement Therapy (OPT) indeed incorporates **tactile stimuli** as a crucial component, which sets it apart from traditional speech therapy, primarily characterized by visual and auditory stimuli.

Benefits of Tactile Stimulation in OPT:

- **Enhanced Muscle Control:** Tactile cues provide immediate feedback and help clients gain better control over their oral muscles, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals with motor planning or sensory-motor issues.
- **Improved Sensory Awareness:** Tactile stimulation can improve sensory awareness within the oral cavity, making it easier for clients to discriminate between different oral sensations and movements.
- **Targeted Muscle Strengthening:** Tactile tools and techniques allow therapists to specifically target and strengthen weak or underdeveloped oral muscles, which is essential for improving speech clarity and feeding techniques.

Goals of Oral Placement Therapy (OPT)

1. **Improve Articulation:** Enhance the precision and clarity of speech sounds.
2. **Enhance Tongue Mobility:** Increase tongue range of motion, lateralization, and control for better articulation and swallowing.
3. **Develop Lip Closure:** Strengthen and coordinate lip muscles to achieve proper lip closure for speech and feeding.
4. **Improve Jaw Stability and Control:** Enhance jaw stability, range of motion, and control for effective chewing, speech, and swallowing.
5. **Increase Sensory-Motor Awareness:** Improve sensory awareness and discrimination within the oral cavity.
6. **Facilitate Swallowing Function:** Enhance safe and efficient swallowing, reducing the risk of aspiration and choking.
7. **Generalize Skills to Functional Communication:** Transfer improved oral motor skills into everyday communication and feeding activities.
8. **Promote Independence in Feeding:** Enable individuals to self-feed and manage different food textures safely.
9. **Enhance Oral Sensory Tolerance:** Reduce sensory aversions and hypersensitivity to different textures and tastes.
10. **Support Speech and Language Development:** Address underlying oral motor issues that may be impacting speech and language acquisition.

Populations that can benefit from Oral Placement Therapy:

1. **Children with Developmental Disabilities:** Individuals with developmental disabilities, such as Down syndrome, Autism, Cerebral palsy can benefit from OPT to enhance speech clarity, feeding skills, and overall oral motor function.
2. **Children with Speech Sound Disorders:** OPT is often used with children who have difficulty producing clear speech sounds due to issues with oral motor coordination, such as articulation disorders or phonological disorders.
3. **Children with Apraxia of Speech:** Children diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) may benefit from OPT to improve their motor planning and coordination for speech production.

4. **Children with Feeding Challenges:** Infants and young children who experience feeding difficulties, including problems with breastfeeding, bottle feeding, and transitioning to solid foods, may benefit from OPT to improve oral motor skills related to feeding.
5. **Individuals with Orofacial Myofunctional Disorders (OMDs):** OMDs involve abnormal oral muscle patterns and resting postures of the tongue, lips, and jaw. OPT can help correct these patterns, which can affect speech, swallowing, and dental development.
6. **Children and Adults with Sensory-Motor Issues:** Individuals who have sensory-motor challenges related to their oral structures, such as hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity, may find OPT helpful in improving sensory awareness and control.

Get Started Today!

Don't wait to help your child thrive. Contact us today to schedule an assessment and learn how TalkTools can make a meaningful difference in your child's life. Together, we'll embark on a journey towards improved speech and motor coordination.

Where: At Blooming Tree Special School, 296 High Street, W3 9BJ

Sessions*: Mondays to Fridays 17:00-20:00
Saturdays 10:00 - 17:00

Contact Us: talktools@aba-easysteps.co.uk

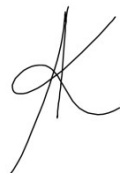
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Services* Costs:

- 1) Oral Placement Therapy Assessment** | Cost £500 including a full assessment and a detailed report (The assessment normally 3 hours in the same day or more depending of the child's behaviour and abilities)
- 2) OPT Programme** | Cost £85 per 45' minutes session (minimum 4 sessions per month), normally once a week depending on the needs and the goal of the programme. (this option follows an assessment)

***All services are contacted in our premises. We do not offer home services.**

Sincerely yours,



Alice Koriki

BCBA Consultant, Clinical Director,
Child psychologist, TalkTools Level 4



The Blooming Tree | ABA Clinic for Autism

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