

Tips & Tricks

S and Z

How to make the /s/ and /z/ sounds

Both of these fricative sounds are made by sticking the tongue just behind the front teeth. The sides of the tongue are up to create a bowl shape for the air to flow down the middle and out through the mouth. Teeth should be closed, lips slightly open. The /s/ sound is a quiet sound (voice is on) and the /z/ sound is noisy (voice is off).

Stuck getting started?

Make sure the tongue stays behind the teeth! For younger kids, using words associated with a visualization may be helpful, such as "keep the snake behind the gate!" For older kids, gently remind them to keep their tongue behind their teeth. Practicing with a mirror can be very in the beginning stages!

A lateral lisp, where the child is producing /s/ and /z/ with the airflow out the sides of their mouths, might make the /s/ sound a little slushy. Shaping the /s/ sound from /t/ can be helpful in these situations! Slowly increase the speed of t-t-t-t sounds and add an /s/ to go down the slide!

Minimal pairs!

Minimal pairs are pairs of words that are the same except for one sound. In articulation therapy, they use the incorrect production and the target sound and are an awesome way to increase awareness of errors and elicit correct productions.

Say the errored sound first, followed by the correct sound. Make it a game- not a *think*, a *sink*!!!

thing/sing thick/sick thaw/saw
think/sink thumb/some thigh/sigh
thank/sank thumb/sum this/sis
mouth/mouse math/mass path/pass

Practicing for 5-10 minutes per day can help your child make steady progress. Find the time- in the car, at bathtime, at the supermarket! Language is everywhere!

Happy Practicing! -Ms Schue