

# Acoustic Highlighting

Objective: To familiarize parents with strategies for highlighting speech sounds enabling the child to heighten auditory awareness.

Importance: By highlighting deleted or omitted speech sounds, you will increase your child's auditory awareness of speech. This heightened awareness can lead to better oral production of speech sounds. This will also lead to stronger phonemic awareness building better awareness of the relationship between the sound and the printed letter.

Imagine yourself at O'Hare waiting in line to check baggage, conversations between travelers occurring in front of and in back of you as you stand in line. Your travel partner says to you, "I'm getting hungry. Hopefully they'll serve a snack on board today. Maybe I'll get a pita. "

You respond, "Never much cared for pita bread."

Your partner replies, "I said maybe I'll get pizzzzza."

That slight exaggeration of the voiced /z/ sound helps you tune in to the message that was intended to be sent by the speaker.

Through the acoustic highlighting of the /z/ sound, the listener was able to identify the spoken word.

As teachers of young children with hearing loss who are growing up surrounded in a noisy world, we strive to teach little listeners just how to tune in to the message sent. Acoustic highlighting is an effective teaching strategy that we can incorporate into traditional teaching, early literacy development, phonemic awareness, and in conversational exchanges as we promote communicative competency.

Three ways

**acoustically highlight**

a sound:

1. Sustain the sound such as in the word "pizzzzza"
2. Pause before the sound "pi zza."
3. Accent the sound, "pizza."

When should I use acoustical highlighting??

- When a child mispronounces a word that you know the child has the developmental ability to produce the mistaken speech sound. For example, the child says, "doug" and the intent is to say "duck" and you know your child can say, "truck" using the same final /k/ sound in another known word.
- When a child misunderstands a word and substitutes another word with a minimal difference. The child might think you said "hat" when you said "cat."
- When providing a new word, highlight the key sound. "I'm gonna read a story about a hen and a ffffox." Draw the child's auditory attention to the new word by sustaining the initial or first sound of the new word.

Videotape example 1A: Acoustic Highlighting

Practice exercise: Given a wordless picture book, sit down with a child and ask the child to tell you about the story. Ask the child to listen as you describe the events that are occurring on a selected page of the story.

\_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrate competency using acoustic highlighting to sustain a key sound.

\_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrate competency using acoustic highlighting to accent a key speech sound.

\_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrate competency using acoustic highlighting to pause drawing the listener's attention to a speech sound.