**Tips for improving your child’s pronunciation skills!**

**Source: RidhimaSomaiya, Faculty, British Council**

Did you know that the number of non-native English speakers in the world outweigh native speakers by 3:1? This has started a trend of an international accent to facilitate mutual understanding. The key is intelligibility – or the ability to be understood clearly. Therefore, it’s not important to imitate the native speaker accent but simply to apply certain strategies while communicating. Here are some ideas to get a head start:

**1. Mimicking model language**: We speak what we hear. If children grow up listening to bad models of English, then they imitate that. To improve pronunciation, ensure that your child listens to good models of pronunciation through videos, listening to songs, YouTube etc. Make the most of these age-appropriate videos for children and teens on the British Council website. You can also watch some of these exciting movies and make it a family movie night. Don’t forget the bucket of popcorn!

**2. Sound it out:** Does this clip from the very popular sitcom I Love Lucy strike a chord? The English alphabet has 26 letters but 44 sounds, five vowels which can be pronounced in 12 different ways! The trick is to ‘find’ these sounds in your mouth by being aware of the position of the tongue, teeth, jaw and lips. Use this video series by BBC which demonstrates how to make these sounds. Feel free to pause, rewind and replay the video till you think you’ve got it right.

**3. Spell it right**: Has it ever happened with you that you have taught your child to phonetically spell C-A-T and then you move on to spelling the word T-H-E but you are stuck! Some words in English are sight words – what we see is what we spell but the pronunciation is different. Here are some very useful sight word flashcards you can use. When reading together, ask your child to point to the sight words he knows. You can even ask him to count how many times a sight word appears in the book.

**4. Use a dictionary:** If you think physical dictionaries are passe, online dictionaries are perfect for you. Not only do they fit in your phones and pocket, but they also serve multiple purposes like breaking down of words, providing their phonetic transcription and an audio option to listen to their pronunciation.

**5. Pronunciation and play**: it’s never too early to start working on pronunciation. Younger children are very receptive to sounds since they learn how to listen before they speak. Repeating rhymes and singing songs develop the muscles of the mouth and makes children used to the rhythm of English. Plus, it’s a lot of fun when accompanied with actions. For older kids – tongue twisters are very popular. Organize a tongue twister challenge and involve everyone in the family for an evening full of fun.

**6. Reading aloud:** Reading bedtime stories to your child every night is a great way not just to lull them to sleep but also to hone their pronunciation while they listen to their favourite tales. Here are some great stories to choose from for your daily night routine. You can watch the stories come to life by playing the video or print the story and read out to your child. Don’t forget to add your own versions of character voices for that extra effect!

Children feel confident to speak as soon as they realize that they can pronounce words just like grown-ups. With these easy strategies and fun games, you can give your child the tools to independently work on their own pronunciation so they won’t need an accent coach like Clouseau in Pink Panther.