



Cued Speech

Cued Speech is a mode of communication. It is not an independent language such as American Sign Language or English. It is a way to visually communicate language through the same building blocks spoken language uses.

You can use it to support language development and help your child acquire the language of your home.

As defined by the National Cued Speech Association, cued speech is a visual mode of communication that uses handshapes and placements on the face in combination with mouth movements of speech to make the phonemes (or different sounds of spoken language) look different from each other.

Cued Speech uses eight handshapes combined with 8 different placements on the face to represent every possible phoneme (or unit of sound), so you can cue any word in the English language. Cued Speech has been adapted for over 65 different languages including Spanish.

People cue and talk at the same time.

It's helpful to teach other family members how to cue too. Your child does not need to learn how to cue; however, the more exposure your child has to cuing the more your child will learn to understand the cues you use as you talk.

Cued Speech can help children learn sounds by providing visual information about the sounds they may have a difficult time hearing. Cued Speech distinguishes between sounds that are said in the same way or look the same when they are said but sound differently.

For example, the words /pop/ and /bob/ look the same when you say them. By adding in cues to visually show the consonant sound, /p/ or /b/, your child can more easily learn to identify the difference. There are other sounds that look the same but are different such as: f & v, t & d, and s & z.

Watch this example of how cuing visually shows the difference between sounds.

Some letters sound differently depending on other letters in the word. For example, cats and dogs both end in the letter s, but when they are said aloud, they do not sound the same.



By using the cue, a child can see how they sound differently, and this can help them learn that the letter s can sound differently depending on the word.

Here is how this difference looks when it is cued.

Children with hearing loss have a more difficult time learning articles such as *a, and, the*; learning abstract words such as loyalty and justice, and learning plural -s or different verb tenses such as words ending in -ed. These difficulties can create challenges for children when they are learning to read. Cued Speech allows for you to cue any word that you speak, this is called transliterating, that is pairing cues with what you say during normal conversational speech.

Earlier hearing loss identification, combined with advanced hearing technology, and specialized intervention provides developmental opportunities. Adding cued speech can increase your child's awareness of sounds by helping them learn sound differences. The ability to distinguish between sounds helps children with hearing loss use those sounds when they are learning to read.

Cued speech is quick and easy to learn. The first step is to find learning support that works for you, it can be online, in a class, or with a speech language pathologist that specializes in cued speech. Once the hand shapes and placements of each phoneme are learned, you then have the foundation to cue any word in your language.

Practice every day. You can practice by yourself while looking in a mirror, you can practice with your family and friends, in a class with others who are learning, or while you are listening to audio books.

As you learn to cue, there are a few tips that will help you get started. For consonant sounds you use a handshape. For vowel sounds you use a hand shape or a face placement. For diphthongs, that is, when two vowels run together, you move your hand from one vowel position to the other. To cue a word, put the consonant handshape in the position of the vowel that follows. For example, to cue the word 'pea' hold the /p/ handshape in the /ee/ position as you say the word. To cue 'me' hold the /m/ handshape in the /ee/ position as you say the word.

You can use Cued Speech anytime you are talking with your child – when you are playing, reading or even when you are watching tv. After a while, your child will be able to understand what you are cuing even when they are not wearing their hearing technology, such as when they are in the bath tub. The more your child is exposed to the cues along with speech the sooner they can benefit from this.



You can use Cued Speech with a child of any age. The earlier on you start using cued speech, the easier it will be for your child to use the visual and oral cues in learning the sounds of your language. Because cued speech is used to improve reading skills, children should be exposed to cued speech before they learn to read so that they can use their foundational knowledge of the sounds as they learn to read.