

DOWN SYNDROME

News

SPEECH INTELLIGIBILITY:**Helping Children and Adults Develop and Maintain Understandable Speech (Part 3 of 3)**

Libby Kumin, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES

As young children first develop speech, most use what are called “phonological processes.” These are sound simplifications or substitution patterns children discover, usually on their own, that make their speech production easier. It enables them to make a variety of different sounds, even when they can’t make all of the sounds. It is a step in learning sounds and the sound patterns (where do sounds go, what sounds can be combined, etc.) of their language.

For example, a child may say “tootie” instead of “cookie” because he still can’t make back sounds. Or he may leave off all of the final consonant sounds in words, saying “ca” for both “cat” and “cap”. At the same time, he may say “po” for “pot” and “to” for “top,” proving that he is capable of saying the final consonants of cat and cap. So sometimes the problem is that he doesn’t know when to use these sounds, not that he can’t say them.

What can you do at home?

The most common phonological process used by children with Down syndrome is final consonant deletion—leaving off the final consonant sound in words. You can help bring the need for using final sounds into awareness. Make a card game with the goal of collecting pairs of cards, or use the cards to plan a matching memory game, where you search for the pairs. The pictures or photos that you choose should be of words that differ only in the final sound in the word, like “boat, bone, bowl” or “can and cat” or “book and boot”. If your child can read, write the word under the picture, and make the final sound in bold letters. The players take turns asking, “Do you have any _____?” If your child says “bow,” you tell him that you don’t know which card he wants. Then you model the correct pronunciation. “Do you want bone or boat?”

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Mission

The mission of the NDSC is to provide information, advocacy and support concerning all aspects of life for individuals with Down syndrome.

Vision

The vision of the NDSC is a world with equal rights and opportunities for people with Down syndrome.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow! Where did 2014 go? It seems we were all just visiting in Indianapolis for our annual convention. However, it's been several months and we have hit the ground running preparing for the 2015 Convention in Phoenix! We hope you and your family are already beginning to plan your trip. Registration will open in March, and we are anticipating a great turnout, so register early—you won't want to miss it!



In addition to planning for the annual convention, NDSC has been working on many other projects to assist you and your family. The second edition of our prenatal pamphlet, produced in partnership with Global Down Syndrome Foundation will be published in 2015. To date, over 100,000 pamphlets have been given to health care providers and patients. As with all our materials, this new edition will be distributed free-of-charge, in English and Spanish, to expectant parents.

In addition, revisions and additions are being made to our Adult Sibling Toolkit, a new product which premiered at the Indianapolis convention. The toolkit has been widely distributed and has received great reviews from parents and siblings as a wonderful resource for their families.

In Washington, D.C., we have been hard at work regarding the Keeping All Students Safe Act, which would prevent restraint and seclusion of our children in schools, as well as the ABLE Act, which would allow tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities.

As a result of our collaboration with other advocacy groups, be on the lookout for an exciting new initiative for World Syndrome Day 2015! We are excited about it here at the NDSC and hope you will be as well.

The New Year is a time to reflect on the past and make resolutions for the future! The NDSC is committed to providing resources and information, advocacy and support concerning all aspects of life for individuals with Down syndrome. We cannot do it without you and thank you for your continued support and involvement with this outstanding organization.

I hope this New Year brings you and your family health, happiness and love.

Marilyn

Speech Intelligibility

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VOICE

Your child's voice quality, and the volume and pitch he uses when speaking can also affect intelligibility. In children with Down syndrome, voice quality is often described as hoarse, rough, or breathy. For voice difficulties, an examination by an otolaryngologist (ENT) is needed before any speech treatment begins. There may be medical reasons for the problem—such as allergies or anatomical differences in the larynx (voice box), which would require medical treatment. Voice quality can also be related to low muscle tone.

Pitch

Pitch refers to how high or low the voice sounds. Generally speaking, the range of pitches that children and adults with Down syndrome are able to use is similar to the range used by people without Down syndrome.

Volume

To be intelligible, your child needs to be loud enough for the listener to hear, and appropriate to the situation. Often, difficulties are not due to respiratory or voice production difficulties, but related to the child's lack of awareness of volume. So, what your child may really need to learn is *when* to be loud and *when* to use a quiet voice. This is best taught at home (or in the community) in real-life situations. At home, you can let your child know that you are having

difficulty hearing him and that he needs to speak more loudly. You can let him know when you are on the phone and he needs to use a soft voice. You can also discuss and practice different situations. Practice may be all that is needed to increase or decrease his volume.

Home Activities

- Talk about loud and soft voices. Label voices as your “inside” and “outside” voices.
- Practice using a loud voice in a tunnel so you can hear the echo.
- Demonstrate using a soft voice, from a whisper to a quiet voice.
- Comment on loud and soft noises in the environment. For example, when you hear the lion at the zoo, comment on the loud roar. Listen to quiet sounds in the environment, such as water dripping and birds chirping, and comment on them.
- Talk about places where you need to use a soft voice, such as at school or church, and places where you can use a loud voice, such as at a baseball game or on a roller coaster.
- Read books about whispering and loud and soft sounds. Some favorite books for talking about volume include:
 - *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?* by Dr. Seuss,
 - *Noisy Nora* by Rosemary Wells,
 - *SHHH!* by Suzy Kline,
 - *Noisemakers* by Judith Caseley,
 - *Helen and the Great Quiet* by Rick Fitzgerald,
 - *The Quiet Noisy Book*

by Margaret Brown, and

– *The Very Quiet Cricket*
by Eric Carle

- Play games where your child has to use a loud or soft voice or a whisper. “Telephone” is a good game to use, but remember to keep the messages short. Several children stand in a line. The first child whispers a message in the ear of the next child in line, and so on down the line. The last child has to repeat the message he heard and compare it to the message the first child sent.
- When your child has learned how to control volume, but doesn't remember to do so, use a sign or cue at home as a reminder.

RESONANCE

(ORAL/NASAL BALANCE)

Resonance refers to how full and vibrant a voice sounds—the tone of the voice. When someone sounds as if they are all stuffed up or “twangy,” you are noticing the quality of vocal resonance. Many children with Down syndrome have resonance problems based on medical conditions. If your child has allergies or enlarged tonsils and adenoids, he may breathe through his mouth. As a result, sounds may never be resonated through his nasal cavity. He will sound stuffed up, as if he has a perpetual cold. This is known as hyponasal resonance or hyponasality. An ENT or an allergist can treat the problem. If your child has a short velum (soft palate area), a high palatal vault, or velopharyngeal insufficiency

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(difficulty using the soft palate and throat wall muscles to seal off the nasal cavity to keep air/sounds out of the nose, and to send air through the mouth), this is known as hypernasality. With hypernasality, your child's speech would sound "twangy." The speech-language pathologist can give your child muscle strengthening exercises to help him improve velopharyngeal closure. If the hypernasality is severe and affects intelligibility, it may be necessary to seek treatment from a maxillofacial team. These teams are usually made up of dental, medical, and speech specialists and are located in hospitals. They might prescribe a speech appliance, similar to a dental bridge that would make velopharyngeal closure easier. Or they might recommend pharyngeal surgery, which would also aid in the closure.

RATE

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The rate of speech, or how fast we talk, is an important factor in whether we can be easily understood. Children with Down syndrome may have a rapid rate, slow rate, or uneven and changing rate of speech. Rate patterns have not been documented in the literature. In my experience as a speech-language pathologist, I have found that children with Down syndrome often speak rapidly or in spurts. They may start out at a comfortable rate for the listener, but often speed up as the conversation progresses. Fast or spurted rate may

result in slurred or difficult-to-understand speech, because there are no pauses between words, and words tend to run into each other. If your child has trouble speaking at an appropriate rate, there are a variety of activities you can try at home.

Home Activities

- A pacing board may be used to help your child develop a more regular rhythmic pattern. If your child is typically using five words, the pacing board would have five circles or five stickers. Your child would put his finger on the first circle as he said the first word, the second circle as he said the second word, and so on. This acts as a visual reminder to speak more rhythmically.
- Lightly beat a drum as your child speaks and have him try to match his speech rate to the drum. For example, have your child practice saying a phrase such as "Hi! How are you? I'm fine. Bye now!" to the accompaniment of a drumbeat. You can also use a metronome for this type of practice.
- Have conversations with your child in which each of you sings your words to a musical rhythm. You can use a song that your child already knows or make up a different tune. You can use slow and fast songs. You can also sing to a specific rate and rhythm using a metronome and a specific tune.
- Talk about slow and fast speech and demonstrate slow and fast speech. Play a game in which you say sentences or read a story while your child moves a car along a toy road. When you speak slowly, he



DR. LIBBY KUMIN

moves the car slowly. When you speed up, he should make the car speed up. When this activity becomes familiar, have your child repeat phrases after you, and move the car along at the speed of speech. This activity can be varied with a toy horse on a trail or a toy boat on a river.

- Read the story of *The Tortoise and the Hare*, and talk about slow and fast. You can say a rhyme or sing a song very fast and very slow.

FLUENCY

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Fluency refers to the smoothness of speech—how easily one sound flows into the next sound, one syllable flows into the next syllable, and one word flows into the next word. Problems with fluency are sometimes referred to as stuttering. Children who stutter may have repetitions or blocks (periods of silence in which they seem to be struggling to emit a sound).

Stuttering or dysfluency is more prevalent in people with Down

“Being able to comprehend what the speaker is saying involves more than speech.”

syndrome. At present, the best estimates are that approximately 45 to 53 percent of people with Down syndrome stutter. Sometimes fluency problems occur together with rate problems. If your child has fluency problems, it is important not to draw attention to them. In general, you should maintain eye contact, be very patient, and listen to what your child is saying. Don't fill in the words that are giving him difficulty and don't tell him to slow down. Let him know that you will continue to listen to him until he is finished.

Fluency problems are complex and need to be treated by a speech-language pathologist. He or she will suggest home activities appropriate to the specific type of fluency problems your child has.

PROSODY

Prosody is the general term for the rhythm of speech. Prosody includes how pitch and inflection are used to convey meaning. For instance, in English the voice generally goes up at the end of the sentence for a question and down for a statement. I have observed clinically that

prosody is often difficult for children with Down syndrome, especially as they begin to use longer sentences. They may emphasize the wrong word in a sentence or speak in something of a monotone.

Home Activities

- Help your child learn more about the musicality of language by singing words as a game, as if you were in an opera. So, sing “Good morning. How are you?” That emphasizes the inflection and rhythm.
- Play a game where you pretend to be a robot or alien that speaks in a monotone on one pitch (or use a puppet). Your child's job is to teach you to speak more like a human. For example, you say, “May I have the ball?” robotically. Your child models, “May I have the ball?” with the pitch going up at the end. He doesn't give you the ball until you imitate his model correctly.
- Use the same words with varying inflections. For example, you ask, “Ice cream?” Your child needs to respond, “Ice cream,” with the

inflection of a statement if he wants some. If he says it as a question (modeling you), you say, “Well, do you want ice cream?” Then change roles. Your child asks, “Baseball?” and you say, “Baseball,” and put the TV on to begin watching the game.

Up to this point, we have focused on the speech of the person speaking. But, being able to comprehend what the speaker is saying involves more than speech. Comprehensibility also involves pragmatic language and nonverbal language factors, how complex the message is, differences in listeners, and factors in the environment.

PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE FACTORS

Pragmatics refers to social language and language in daily use. How are your child's interpersonal language skills affecting whether the listener can understand his speech? Is your child more difficult to understand when he goes off the topic? You can teach a child social scripts using role playing and practice. For example, you can download photos of famous people, including your child's favorite music stars or sports heroes. Then, you can practice a specific skill, such as pretending to greet each one. Therapy can help your child learn and improve their ability to tell what happened, retell a story, how to ask for help, and how to recognize when someone does not understand what you have said. In adolescence, social skills groups can help.

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Speech Intelligibility

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NONVERBAL FACTORS

How are your child's nonverbal communication skills, like eye contact, affecting what the listener understands? Usually, you just need to bring skills such as eye contact into awareness, and then practice those skills to help your child learn the skills. SLP sessions can teach skills for eye contact, gestures and facial expressions to support your message, and appropriate social and personal distances. The SLP needs to work closely with the family so you can teach, reinforce, and reward the skills in daily life.

LANGUAGE MESSAGE FACTORS

How does the complexity of the message affect how understandable your child's speech is? For example, your child can often be understood well when he is greeting someone, but is more difficult to understand when he is trying to tell you about something that happened at school. In therapy, the SLP can work with your child on a sequenced hierarchy of message complexity, beginning with greetings, and moving to phrases, sentences, longer complex sentences, conversation and explanations, such as giving the details on an upsetting situation.

EXTERNAL/ ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The optimal environment for speaking has sufficient lighting and

“When you can speak intelligibly, people view you as more capable.”

very little or no background noise. We often cannot control external factors such as a noisy environment, but therapy can help your child learn to be aware of, and adjust to various external factors, e.g. talking louder or moving closer in a noisier room.

CONCLUSION

The good news is that there is no factor that affects the intelligibility of your child's speech that is not also found in other children. SLPs have a great deal of knowledge regarding treatment for the various factors that can influence intelligibility of speech. Both low muscle tone and oral motor planning problems have been noted by clinicians working with children with Down syndrome, but the information on intervention

for childhood dysarthria and developmental apraxia of speech is typically not actively used in intervention with children and adolescents with Down syndrome. Sometimes, SLPs will tell you that what you are hearing is just “Down syndrome speech” and they can't work on it. They are wrong. Treatment must be individually planned for each child or adult with Down syndrome. The treatment plan should be based on the results of the comprehensive evaluation, and should address each of the areas in which the child is experiencing difficulty. You will see progress, and you will see improvement in speech intelligibility.

As children and adults are included within school, the workplace and the community, being able to be understood is increasingly important and impacts social integration. When you can speak intelligibly, people view you as more capable and more social, and quality of life is improved.

(See parts 1 and 2 of Dr. Kumin's article on Speech Intelligibility in *Down Syndrome News*, Spring and Summer 2014 issues, available on the NDSC website at <http://www.ndsccenter.org/resources/general-information/ds-news-articles/>)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.ndsccenter.org

Go to parent resources, speech and language. There are online information pamphlets on childhood apraxia of speech, and oral motor skills available in English and Spanish.

www.apraxia-kids.org

This is an excellent website from the Childhood Apraxia of Speech Association, with many articles that may be helpful for parents or SLPs to read. You can also find resources such as Time to Sing CDs, professionally arranged and performed children's music, in which the singing of popular children's music has been slowed down, enabling children with speech disorders to sing along. You can also join the Apraxia-Kids listserv, a moderated e-mail discussion group of approximately 2,500 members from around the world.

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This summer in Indianapolis, we held our largest annual convention so far. It was an awesome weekend full of education and learning, as well as a truly amazing celebration of people with Down syndrome. The one area where we know we fell short was in the actual meeting space in the convention hotel. We want you to know that we were well aware of this issue, and addressed these concerns with the staff at the JW Marriott Indianapolis. Their General Manager offered to write a letter to our members to explain how this occurred. We thank him for reaching out to our attendees to apologize, and we look forward to continuing to work with Marriott Hotel properties in the future.

November 11, 2014



National Down Syndrome Congress
30 Mansell Court, Suite 108
Roswell, GA 30076

Dear NDSC Attendees,

The JW Marriott in Indianapolis was fortunate to host the NDSC conference this year. While the overall conference was successful, I would like to apologize that several of the meeting rooms were crowded and in many cases, standing room only.

We always try to provide our guests with an excellent experience and I am sorry we did not achieve this in all aspects of your meeting. Our meeting room diagrams that we provided to the NDSC planning team were not accurate. Several of the meeting rooms did not accommodate as many guests as the room diagram indicated. This caused some of the rooms to be too small for the number of attendees in some of the sessions. We take full responsibility for the problems you incurred and it should not reflect on the National Down Syndrome Congress.

I am very sorry we did not meet all of your expectations and I hope you will one day give us a chance to regain your confidence in our service and facility.

Sincerely,

JW MARRIOTT INDIANAPOLIS

Phil Ray
General Manager

CALL FOR NDSC ANNUAL AWARD NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015.

Each year, the NDSC is proud to present awards to people and organizations making positive contributions to the Down syndrome community. We look forward to our awards presentation every year and can't wait for this year in Phoenix!

Nominations may be submitted by anyone who wishes to direct the attention of the NDSC's board of directors to outstanding achievement. In its selection, the board of directors will not necessarily be restricted to those programs or individuals, but may consider reports of outstanding achievement from other sources, and may, on its own initiative, select an award recipient.

AWARD GUIDELINES

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Does the program, publication, individual or organization promote a positive image of people with Down syndrome, accentuating abilities instead of disability? Does it present accurate information? Does it recognize the value of persons with DS?

Does it focus on people, not on the condition of Down syndrome? Does it celebrate diversity? Does it use people first language? Does it enhance the dignity of people with DS? Does it avoid stereotyping?

AWARD CATEGORIES

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Christian Pueschel Memorial Citizen Award

Recognizing an individual with DS whose achievements, service and contributions have enhanced the value and dignity of people with DS and their families.

Education Award

For outstanding performance on behalf of students with DS.

Employer of the Year Award

Recognizing an employer for efforts in creating quality employment opportunities for people with DS.

Exceptional Meritorious Service Award

An individual whose service and contributions to people with DS and their families have had local, state and national significance.

National Media Award

Honors national media efforts, which create better understanding of DS and people with DS.

National Parent Group Award

Affiliate parent group of the NDSC, which has performed outstanding service on behalf of people with DS and their families.

Pueschel/Tjossem Memorial Research Award

Recognizes research, which has contributed to greater knowledge and understanding of DS.

Sig Pueschel Service Award

Honors an individual or organization for their outstanding contributions to the NDSC.

SUBMITTING A NOMINATION

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For complete submission details, award descriptions, and nomination forms, please visit the NDSC website. A nomination form must accompany each nomination. Nomination forms and supporting materials can be submitted by mail, e-mail, or fax.



DAVID TOLLESON AND JIM FABER WITH PRESIDENT'S AWARD RECIPIENTS YVONNE MADDOX (LEFT) AND PATTI SAYLOR

Your Child's Strengths: What Parents Need to Know

Ryan M. Niemiec, Psy.D., Education Director, VIA Institute on Character, Cincinnati, OH;
Karrie Shogren, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Kansas University Center on Developmental
Disabilities, University of Kansas

(The authors of this article led a presentation titled—“What is Positive Psychology? Practical Tips for Supporting People with Down syndrome”—at the 2014 Convention in Indianapolis. Participants filled every seat, windowsill, table-top, aisle-way, and floor space! This response from participants shows the hunger people have to learn new, positive approaches to understanding and helping people, and is the catalyst for this article.)

We talk about focusing on strengths, but what does this mean?

It is not uncommon for parents, teachers, advocates, and providers who support people with Down syndrome, to say—“Look for the individual’s strengths...ask them about their strengths...play to their strengths.” But what kind of “strengths” are they talking about?

Often, in the disability field the focus, when discussing strengths, has been on “skills” (e.g., reading skills, communication skills, social skills, cooking skills, etc.) and “resources” (e.g., having many friendships, living in a safe neighborhood, going to a good school, etc.). And these are hugely important areas. But, another incredibly important aspect of focusing on strengths is understanding character strengths, those strengths that deal with who we are as human beings—the strengths that define us.

In 2004, a breakthrough occurred in the social sciences. A new language for understanding what is best in human beings was conceived. This “language of strengths” is known as

the VIA Classification and consists of 24 character strengths that fall under 6 virtue categories (see Table on p. 59). For example, bravery, perseverance, and honesty are strengths of courage while curiosity, creativity, and perspective are strengths of wisdom. These character strengths are positive qualities all human beings have and can express, to live their best life and to positively impact others. This breakthrough, the result of a 3-year project involving 55 scientists, has impacted millions of people around the world.

The application of character strengths with people with Down syndrome is a new area of study. But we are finding that the VIA Classification provides a useful framework for identifying each person’s (with and without Down syndrome) highest strengths and ways to build positive outcomes based on an understanding of those strengths. Parents and support providers resonate with the use of this strengths “language” in describing what is best in individuals with Down syndrome. One parent exclaimed, “This gives me a whole

new way for thinking about my daughter. It’s a recipe for seeing and talking to her and it’s like a special tool that gets me to know her on the inside.” And, in a world that is dominated by our negativity bias, stereotypes, and a focus upon what is wrong, additional perspectives are sorely needed. Working with character strengths offers a perspective shift from “what’s wrong to what’s strong.”

As you can see in the table, these character strengths are easy to understand and when given a chance, are easy to recognize in others. Research tells us that working with our character strengths is connected to many positive outcomes such as greater happiness, life meaning, better relationships, more achievement, and less depression. When people are encouraged to express their character strengths – especially their strongest strengths – they tend to feel energized, more engaged, and happier with what they are doing. Since one’s highest strengths are viewed as “the real me” and “my best self,” it is by these strengths that people with Down syndrome can feel “known” and “seen” for who they really are. Identifying, discussing, and working with character strengths helps us all move

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Your Child's Strengths

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beyond the surface and around the stereotypes, and truly do what all of us want to do: to see and know the person, not the disability.

Strategies for parents

These 24 character strengths are like seeds that are within each individual. When we give seeds proper nourishment they will grow into something beautiful. Seeds that grow into fruits, herbs, and vegetables enhance our health; seeds that develop into trees, flowers, and plants inspire us and improve our environment. Similarly, when we give attention, encouragement, and support to a child's character strengths, this can help the strengths grow. When the strengths grow, the child is able to express themselves more fully as well as offer a positive impact on others. Sometimes it is obvious that a child's "humor" seed has grown significantly as he captivates a room with laughter and funny stories while another child has developed her kindness strength as she goes out of her way to hold doors for people, do favors for those in need, and show compassion for friends who are struggling.

For parents, this classification represents a fresh, accurate, and helpful way of looking at their children. With any new approach, we often need a gentle "push" or at least some initial tips or strategies. Here are a few steps to get you started on the journey of identifying and boosting your child's character strengths:

1. Make a list of your child's top 5-7 character strengths.

As you look at the Table listing the character strengths, which 5-7 qualities best describes who your child is?

If age-appropriate for your child, ask your child which strengths they believe to be their best qualities. Compare your list with your child's list.

2. Spot your child's strengths in action.

When you notice your child use a character strength, even a small amount (e.g., asking one question shows curiosity; coming up with one new idea indicates creativity), point this out to them. Explain to your child what you observed.

See the examples in the Table.

Express appreciation to your child. Make it clear to your child that you value who they are and that you appreciate the strengths they express.

3. Reflect on stories.

Think of something recently that your child did that made you marvel or laugh or feel inspired. Replay that story in your mind.

Go back through the story again and spot the character strengths your child was using.

4. Be a character strengths "champion" for your child.

Don't forget about you! In addition to noticing and building the strengths of your child, an additional perspective is to consider that raising a child who knows and uses his or her character strengths starts with the parents and what the parents

(and teachers and other family members) are modeling day-to-day in front of the child. If a parent does not bring forth character strengths of fairness, love, curiosity, social intelligence, gratitude, and humility, how can they expect their child to? Parents can get a jump-start on the study and practice of their own character strengths by taking the free, online VIA Survey (www.viacharacter.org) that measures the 24 strengths. It takes 10 minutes and you'll receive a rank-order of your strengths of character starting with the highest. You can then make a conscious effort to model your highest strengths when you interact with your child.

*Ryan M. Niemiec is author of *Mindfulness and Character Strengths* (2014) and *Positive Psychology at the Movies* (2014). He is a psychologist and education director of the global, nonprofit VIA Institute on Character, a positive psychology organization that teaches and collaborates with people around the world with regard to the education, research, and practice of character strengths.*

Karrie Shogren works in the area of self-determination and positive psychology, and focuses on using strengths-based approaches to support positive outcomes for all people, including those with disabilities. She is an associate professor of special education and associate director of the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Kansas.

The VIA Classification: The 24 character strengths found in all human beings, with real examples of people with Down syndrome.

VIRTUE CATEGORY	CHARACTER STRENGTH	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Wisdom	Creativity	You like to create unique things that are of use. You can think of many different ways to solve a problem.	A young man plays the guitar for live shows and wears a unique outfit for each show.
	Curiosity	You like to explore things. You are very interested in trying out new activities and meeting new people.	A young child asks her parents many questions about each new place she goes to around the city.
	Judgment/ Critical Thinking	You are logical and like to think. When someone gives an opinion you like to examine it in many different ways.	An adolescent tries different approaches to program a TV remote, thinking through all his options.
	Love of Learning	You want to keep learning. You love to deepen your knowledge. You spend a lot of time learning as much as you can.	An adult has an interest in learning a lot on a particular topic & takes college classes.
	Perspective	You are wise. You learn from your mistakes. You offer guidance to others who are struggling.	A friend is upset after his basketball team loses. His friend tells him: "It's OK. It's only a game."
Courage	Bravery	You face your fears. When there is a problem, you go right toward it to solve it. You stand up for what is right.	A young woman is nervous about public speaking. She takes a deep breath, faces her fear, and walks up front.
	Perseverance	When you have a goal, you keep going. You overcome anything that might get in your way. You finish what you start.	A young adult repeats her personal motto to herself when she is stressed: "Just keep going...keep trying."
	Honesty	You tell the truth. You are viewed by others as sincere and genuine.	A little girl exclaims that even though it's not always comfortable, she chooses to tell the truth to people.
	Zest	You are full of energy. You are enthusiastic about life. You always seem to be talking to people.	A friendly adolescent is always the first to greet people at each activity and sporting event.
Humanity	Love	You are loving toward others and you receive love from others. You value being close to people.	An adolescent hugs others in a warm, caring way following a positive interaction.
	Kindness	You often do good things for people. You are helpful and caring. You are generous.	A woman explains she gets great pleasure from being nice to people any time she can.
	Social Intelligence	You are closely aware of your feelings and the feelings of others. You seem to say the right thing in many situations.	A man noticed a sad expression on his co-worker's face and asked her how she was doing.
Justice	Teamwork	You value being a team player. You are loyal to your group. You always fulfill your duty on teams and in groups.	A young woman decides to give back to her community by volunteering.
	Fairness	You believe strongly in equality for everyone. You treat people the way you want to be treated.	A woman demands justice to her supervisor when she sees a co-worker being mistreated.
	Leadership	You are good at organizing groups of people. You would much rather be the leader than a follower in a group.	A man explains he enjoys being an advocate for people who do not have "a voice."

The VIA Classification, continued

VIRTUE CATEGORY	CHARACTER STRENGTH	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Temperance	Forgiveness	You often give people a second chance after they have harmed you. You are good at letting things go.	In response to being teased, a man decides to simply walk away and "let it go."
	Humility	You are a modest person. You do not brag about yourself. You place the attention on other people.	A musician shares how he is happy to perform on stage but to let others get the attention.
	Prudence	You are cautious to not take too many risks. You are good at planning. You are responsible and usually on time.	An adult is described by friends as very organized and committed to his goals.
	Self-Regulation	You are disciplined. You are good at handling stress. You control your bad habits (e.g., eating, drinking).	A woman announces to her family that she has decided to quit smoking.
Transcendence	Appreciation of beauty & excellence	You often observe beauty around you. You are filled with wonder. You want what you & others do to be "just right."	A man walks into a museum and marvels at the beauty and precision of the artwork.
	Gratitude	You often feel grateful for your life and for the good things that happen. You almost always tell people "thank you."	A couple expresses their appreciation for having connected with a new friend.
	Hope	You are optimistic. You are positive. You often look to the future and see good things.	A young woman describes the forward-thinking optimism of her roommate: "She looks forward, and only forward."
	Humor	You love to make people smile and laugh. You are playful with people. You turn gloomy situations into fun ones.	A man is playful & mischievous with his group; he makes others smile and laugh with each joke.
	Spirituality	You are filled with a sense of life purpose and meaning. You practice a particular faith or set of beliefs.	A young boy enjoys praying and reciting sacred phrases from religious texts.

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How Can I Teach My Child to Read...

when I don't have the time and I don't know how?

by Judy O'Halloran

Our youngest son did not read effectively until he was 17. Not because he has Down syndrome and a language processing disability; but because the conventional, traditional methods, along with school district guidelines, failed him. And to make matters worse, I relied year after year on the “experts” to have the answers. This, despite the fact that I was a vocal advocate, had a degree in secondary education, and was a once-a-week, in-class volunteer since preschool.

Because Casey was not following district timelines by the time he entered middle school, his school planned to switch him to a program focused on lists of survival words. At that point, I was not plagued by a fear that he would ignore a “no trespassing” sign on green, manicured grass and burst into a “ladies room” to gulp down cleaning agents marked “poison.” I was, however, consumed with a determination that he become a functional reader so his adult independent living skills would be broader and his competitive employment options would be wider. Veto that “survival” program.

But I did realize I would have to take a more active role or he would graduate functionally illiterate. In the ensuing years, I read and researched; attended teacher in-service programs; and took reading courses at two universities. These gave me a wide knowledge of reading methodology. But, finally, it was a retired teacher who had been trained in Orton-Gillingham instruction that provided the golden key.

Casey's sophomore year, I told his IEP team that we had given the district long enough. They needed to hire this tutor who would come to school and work with Casey for 50 minutes each day. Mary Ann (the tutor) introduced Casey to phonograms. In a short period of time, he made the quantum leap!

I hope your child does not have to struggle that long. I hope you don't have to search that long. I hope I can give you a short cut to solving the mystery of the “code” upon which our language is developed. And I hope I can instill in you a confidence that will allow you to advocate for your child's progress— and, better yet, a confidence that will encourage YOU to take the lead in helping your child learn to read.

So what are phonograms?

Phonograms show the smallest sounds that make up the words we read. A phonogram may be one letter (the alphabet) or a combination of two, three, or four letters illustrated in the examples below:



There are approximately 72 phonograms that make up 44 sounds in our English reading code:

Phonograms	
Show the Smallest Sounds in Words	
Alphabet	a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
Consonant	tch sh wh ng ph ck gn kn wr mb dge th ch ed ti ci si
Bossy r Partners	er ur ir ear ar or
Vowel Partners	ai ay eigh ee igh oa oe au aw augh oi oy ea ei ey ie ue ew ui ow oo ou ough

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Why do they make such a difference?

Learn them, and you solve the mystery of our reading code. They are logical, predictable, reliable, and make words easy to decode.

Typically, our children thrive in situations that are routine, structured, and predictable. They feel more confident repeating things that give them expected results. Throw something unexpected into the plan, and a meltdown can occur. So doesn't it make sense to use a reading approach that reflects and supports their personalities?

You may be a parent or teacher who has hesitated to introduce decoding (sounding out words). You may have read, been told or experienced that individuals with Down syndrome have stronger visual skills than auditory so you have concentrated on teaching whole words.

But consider also that when our children are less capable in one area than another, we practice those weaker skills to help our children develop them sooner rather than later. If their muscle tone is low, we don't wait until they are two to practice crawling or walking. If they are speech delayed, we don't wait for them to talk before we model correct sounds.

So, as an introduction, whole word memorization is fine. But relying on that approach will limit the number of words our children can read. They will not be able to "attack" unfamiliar words—a skill that will move them toward a more independent functional reading level, expanded adult daily living skills and broader competitive employment options.

So that leads us to what may seem like a daunting question: "How can I teach my child to read when I don't have the time and I don't know how?"

Let me assure you of a few things:

You Know How: You may have never heard of phonograms; but you have an understanding of them or you would not be able to read this article. While it may sound difficult, you are really just building on something

you already know—like "o-w" makes two sounds: /ō/ and /ow/ as in "know how."

Time: You not only have time. You have the best time. Once you become aware of your power and abilities, YOU can take advantage of environmental print and teachable moments. YOU will see the world as your workbook; environmental print as your worksheet; and teachable moments as your opportunities. YOU can teach in the best classrooms ever (cars, restaurants, grocery stores, playgrounds), and you can do it on the go, wherever you go in your hectic schedule. No 30-minute desk drills necessary.

But it's also important to know **Why** it is best to take a major role in teaching our children to read. The 2011 report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress reveals 68% of fourth-graders read below proficiency. When over two-thirds of all fourth graders—nationwide—are not proficient readers, that tells me the problem lies with the system of delivery; not with the children.

English is like math

...except with letters. It's formula driven.

Math:	1	+	3	+	1	=	5
English:	n	+	igh	+	t	=	night
	/n/	+	/ī/	+	/t/		

Now that you have a fundamental understanding of phonograms, let's take a look at how traditional, conventional reading strategies can confuse, frustrate and fail our children...and how phonograms can provide the reliable alternative.

1. CONVENTIONAL THEORY:

Teach the alphabet

A through Z. Stop there.

PHONOGRAMS:

Teach your children, through jingles, gestures, and fun-filled activities, the remainder of the English reading code: the multi-letter phonograms.

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2. CONVENTIONAL THEORY:

Teach one-to-one phonics

Blending and “sounding out” words one letter at a time is confusing and frustrating. Imagine you are a struggling, beginning reader trying to sound out “eight” one letter at a time: /ĕ/+/ī/+/g/+/h/+/t/. Imagine you are a parent trying to explain the correct pronunciation when the letter “a” isn’t even in the word.

PHONOGRAMS:

We read by sounds not by letters. Train the brain to see “sounds” in words, not just a string of letters. Reading the two phonograms (eigh + t) rather than the five letters, makes it easy—and correct.

3. CONVENTIONAL THEORY:

Memorize word families

This theory holds that if certain letter combinations appear frequently, then take a short cut. The problem is that each letter still makes a sound.

Memorizing the ‘at’ family would make this sentence go faster.

The **fat cat sat** on a **mat**.

But what about saying /at/ in these words?

The **fat cat** and **Father** will **eat** on the **boat** in the **water**.

How do you explain that?

PHONOGRAMS:

Instead memorize multi-letter phonograms. They make one sound. Here’s the place to utilize our children’s visual strengths. Have them memorize letter combinations that are reliable time and again!

4. CONVENTIONAL THEORY:

Begin blending “consonant-vowel-consonant” words.

This structure ingrains the short vowel sound. But all vowels, except “e” make three sounds. For example:



CASEY O’HALLORAN

big, bite, pizza. Drilled in making just the short vowel sound, it can be difficult for our routine-loving children to relearn them later.

PHONOGRAMS:

Begin blending (reading) in a “consonant-vowel buddy-consonant” pattern. “Vowel buddy” phonograms (ai, ay, eigh, ee, igh, oa, oe) make just one vowel sound each. And that is the long vowel sound, which is the same as the names of the alphabet vowel letters which children are used to hearing and saying. With 16 single-sound consonants and seven “vowel buddies,” children can read almost 200 two- and three-sound words...without having to be “vowel reprogrammed” later.

Every day, Casey uses his reading to help him live in his own condo, shop, ride public transportation, interact on social media, learn new skills via the internet, and work as a part-time clerical assistant (for the past 15 years) in our county courthouse.

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Are phonograms the single panacea for reading? No. But, in my experience, they provided Casey with the ability to break through the barriers and forge ahead. Without their logical, reliable, dependable foundation, he could not move forward to the more complex components of reading. And the fact that he was able to do so at such a late age, after so many years of failed typical, conventional programs, tells me they were his salvation.

BIO

Judy O'Halloran is an educator, speaker, advocate, and author. She and her friend, Marilee Senior, wanted phonograms to be FUN for their granddaughters so they developed a multi-sensory, family-focused program. Parents of pre-schoolers, home-schooled, struggling, and special needs readers across the country and internationally use their program to help their children learn to read. You can learn more, or contact them, through WordyWormReading.com.

The 2000 Report of the National Reading Panel states "teaching children to manipulate the sounds in language helps them learn to read." Their evidence showed this type of instruction "helped all types of children improve their reading" including those with disabilities. Systematic phonics instruction had a positive and significant effect on disabled readers' reading skills. These children improved substantially in their ability to read words and showed significant gains in their ability to process text.

Developing Early Literacy; Report of The National Early Literacy Panel Institute for Literacy (2008) speaks well to the positive effects of code-focused interventions.

National Right to Read Foundation: Scientific research has clearly demonstrated that explicit phonics is the most effective for all students. Explicit" phonics, is moving from the smallest parts to the whole.

INTELIGIBILIDAD DEL HABLA: para ayudar al desarrollo de los niños y adultos a mantener un lenguaje comprensible

Dra. Libby Kumin, CCC-SLP

APRAXIA DEL HABLA INFANTIL (AHI)

La apraxia del habla infantil es un desorden de la producción motora del habla. Los niños que tienen esta alteración presentan dificultades para hacer planes, para coordinarse, para producir y secuenciar



los sonidos del habla. La apraxia del habla infantil (AHI) interfiere en la habilidad del niño para reproducir sonidos y combinarlos en sílabas, palabras, frases y conversaciones. Otros términos como la apraxia del desarrollo, dispraxia, apraxia verbal pediátrica o simplemente apraxia son válidos para referirnos al mismo problema. Algunos niños con síndrome de Down tienen características del AHI, pero no todos.

Para continuar leyendo el artículo:

"Inteligibilidad del habla: para ayudar al desarrollo de los niños y adultos a mantener un lenguaje comprensible" ingrese al blog del NDSC en español: <http://blogenespanol.ndscenter.org/>

Este es el segundo de una serie de tres artículos que debatirán los factores que pueden afectar a la inteligibilidad del habla para los niños y adultos con síndrome de Down, con el objetivo de ayudar a las familias y a los terapeutas de lenguaje a identificar y trabajar los factores específicos que afectan a la falta de comprensión del habla de su hijo.

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43rd Annual NDSC Convention
June 25 – 28, 2015 • Phoenix, Arizona



Convention registration opens March, 2015.

Visit www.convention.ndscenter.org often
to view our growing schedule of activities.

Our block of rooms at the JW Marriott
Desert Ridge will also open in March, 2015.

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