**Oral Motor Exercises**

Oral-motor exercises are often helpful for children who have trouble saying sounds and are difficult to understand. Your child’s therapist may prescribe exercises designed to strengthen the articulators (such as lips, tongue, jaw) in order to help the child make the movements that are needed to say sounds correctly. For example, in order to say the “m” sound, the child must be able to keep the lips closed; or in order to say the “l” sound, the child must be able to place the tongue tip up to the top of the mouth. The following are some general guidelines to assist you in effectively carrying out any oral-motor exercises that are prescribed:

ALWAYS make sure your child is POSITIONED CORRECTLY.

1. Sitting upright (back straight) with flat feet on the floor (if the chair is a little high, place a phone book or something else under feet to provide support) and hands placed on knees. NO LEANING TO THE SIDE OR SLOUCHING.
2. Head facing front (straight-ahead) with chin slightly down. NO TILTING HEAD TO THE SIDE OR BACK AND NO CHIN POINTING UP.
3. After each exercise, have your child close lips and swallow before continuing with the next try. Wipe mouth/chin as necessary.
4. ALWAYS STOP TO REPOSITION your child to the CORRECT SITTING POSITION if he/she moves out of it, *even slightly*.

If your child is receiving oral motor therapy, speak to your child’s speech therapist about specific techniques and exercises that are appropriate for your child.