

Take Care of Your Child's Voice

ENCOURAGE:

- ❑ Water/Fluids: Infants (6 to 26 pounds) 3-6 cups/day. Children (26 to 100 pounds) 4-8 cups/day or check urine colour. If it is clear, your child is getting adequate fluids!
- ❑ Breaks: Your voice needs 15 minutes of rest for every hour it is used.
- ❑ "Good talking" rules: No screaming or shouting, no interrupting, no talking over the TV/radio, no yelling from one room to another.
- ❑ Good health habits: Eat well and sleep well. Avoid a hectic lifestyle. Make sure your child has regular "downtime". Avoid exposure to cigarette smoke and dust.
- ❑ Your own good voice habits: Talk with normal loudness and use a slower speaking pace. When upset or angry, get your point across by talking firmly and getting down to your child's level.

INSTEAD OF:

- ❑ Cheering, yelling, screaming, or shouting: Use whistles, horns, clap, jump up and down to show excitement or touch someone's arm to get his attention.
- ❑ Clearing your throat or coughing: Swallow a sip of water.
- ❑ Talking over noise: Turn down the TV/radio/hair dryer or move to another room.
- ❑ Talking a lot with a cold or sore throat: Take cold medication or cough syrup as per doctor's advice, drink plenty of liquids, and get lots of rest.
- ❑ Breathing through your mouth in cold weather: Stay indoors or put a scarf over your child's mouth to warm the air as he breathes in.
- ❑ Using sound effects (e.g., car zooming, growling, imitating a siren, using cartoon voices etc.): Name the sounds instead (e.g., beep, beep, zoom, go fast, etc.)
- ❑ Whispering: Talk using a very soft and quiet voice.
- ❑ Talking when you are tired: Go to bed!

Reference: "Vocal Hygiene and Voice Protection" - Handout - no source; "Rules of Vocal Hygiene" - Handout - no source; "Do's and Don'ts for a Good Voice" - Handout - no source; "Fluids and Water - Ask the Dietitian" - <http://www.dietitians.com/fluids.html>.