

Lipreading

Although the child may become an expert at lipreading, only about 40% of the spoken word is understood, less if the speaker has an accent, mustache, or beard. Exaggerating pronunciation or speaking in an altered rhythm further lessens comprehension. Parents can help the child understand the spoken word by using the suggestions in the [Nursing Care Guidelines](#) box. The child learns to supplement the spoken word with sensitivity to visual cues, primarily body language and facial expression (e.g., tightening the lips, muscle tension, eye contact).

Nursing Care Guidelines

Facilitating Lipreading

Attract child's attention before speaking; use light touch to signal speaker's presence.

Stand close to child.

Face child directly or move to a 45-degree angle.

Stand still; do not walk back and forth or turn away to point or look elsewhere.

Establish eye contact and show interest.

Speak at eye level and with good lighting on speaker's face.

Be certain nothing interferes with speech patterns, such as chewing food or gum.

Speak clearly and at a slow and even rate.

Use facial expression to assist in conveying messages.

Keep sentences short.

Rephrase message if child does not understand the words.