• It might simply involve demonstrating the correct posture for the child
• It might involve physically moving the child’s face in order to help him/her sense what the correct posture should feel like.

How Can I Find a Speech-Language Pathologist?

• Ask your family doctor
• Call OSLA at 416-920-3676 for the names of private practitioners in your area
• Contact your local hospital, rehabilitation centre or Community Care Access Centre’s rehabilitation department to find out what services are available in your area.

For additional information about Ontario’s speech-language pathologists or audiologists, contact:

Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (OSLA)

Tel: 416-920-3676
Toll free: 1-800-718-OSLA(6752)

or visit www.osla.on.ca

What is Phonology?
Phonology is concerned with forming sounds into words.

What are Phonological Disorders?
Phonological disorders occur when a child has difficulty pronouncing speech sounds. They might be produced as a distortion of the intended sound, where the listener should be able to tell what the sound is supposed to be, but there is something different about the way the person says it. Some people will produce a speech sound exactly as another speech sound is produced. Some children, for example, produce the “s” sound like the “th” in the word “thumb”. And sometimes a speech sound will be omitted altogether.

What if the Disorder Does Not Occur in Every Situation?
Phonological disorders may not be present in all locations. For instance, a child may have difficulty with the “r” sound at the beginning of words but not at the end of words, or only in connected speech but not in isolated words. This is quite common; speech-language pathologists can address these individual needs accordingly.

What Causes Phonological Disorders?
Often it is difficult to determine the cause of a phonological disorder. Difficulties with some speech sounds have to do with the child’s age and level of development. Correct use of some speech sounds is simply not expected until the child is upwards of eight years old. These are not considered phonological disorders. Actual disorders are usually related to impairments and/or interference with the structure and function of the speech and hearing mechanism (teeth, jaw, tongue, ears).

How Do You Treat Phonological Disorders?
Provided that the structure and function of the child’s oral mechanism, as well as the child’s hearing, is normal, a speech-language pathologist may choose various ways to treat the disorder, depending on the child and the disorder:

- In some cases the child might be advised to wait to see if the problem will correct itself.
- Speech therapy might involve auditory training, which involves learning to listen for differences between similar sounds
- It might involve telling the client with words how to posture his/her face

The formation of the child’s teeth, for example, may impede the production of some speech sounds. If a child experiences hearing loss, s/he may have trouble hearing various speech sounds and therefore will not be able to produce them.