

# Dribbling advice sheet

**Target:** Work to improve the child's sensory awareness on the face and within the mouth. It is important to develop an awareness of when the mouth is wet and when it is dry. Awareness can be built by the following activities.

1. Introduce the concepts wet/dry to your child. Try to explore these concepts in games and activities with all parts of the body.
2. Discover things that make the face wet and dry. For instance you can blow a hair dryer on wet hair and talk about how the hair feels when it is wet and then when it is dry (in all activities the aim is to minimise negative associations with a dry face).
3. Use a prompt card (eg, picture of a mouth) or verbally tell your child to swallow in order to keep a dry face (try and emphasize the end goal of dryness rather than always directing attention to the drooling).
4. Give lots of verbal praise every time the child stays dry or remembers to swallow.
5. Get your child to carry a handkerchief or flannel or carry one for them and prompt them to use it throughout the day if their face is wet.

## Why use these suggestions?

Children who drool frequently enough and are always wet need to experience the contrast with dryness that would give them the inner choice to swallow. The above ideas are appropriate for children who do not monitor their own swallowing and seem to be unaware that the face is wet.

Also do the attached oral-motor activities to build up your child's awareness of their mouth and facial muscles. Holding vibrating toys against your child's face (around their mouth) will also help to build up their awareness of their mouth and facial muscles.

Manipulating or massaging the facial muscles will also have a similar effect: eg, squeezing cheeks, lightly tapping around their cheeks, mouth and chin or massaging fingers in circular movements around their cheeks, mouth and chin. Only do this if your child is willing or you may want to see if they can do it themselves. You may want to try and turn these activities into a game of making silly faces/doing silly actions and copying each other.

If you would like this information in another format, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email [wcnt.yourexp@nhs.net](mailto:wcnt.yourexp@nhs.net)

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