



Exclamatory Words

Yay! Ouch! Uh oh! What are they and why are they important?

Exclamatory words are words that many people do not consider true words such as yippee, yay, and oh no. These words are **fun, easy to imitate, and have a wide variety of vowels and early developing consonant sounds** that will help children develop a larger phoneme repertoire. They are made up of simple syllable sequences that are easier to say than other more complex words. **Many children will be able to say these words before they can produce functional words such as more, no, and all done.**

If your child is having difficulty imitating and expressing new words, consider playing with your child in a way that encourages imitation of exclamatory words. You may find that functional words will follow!

Exclamatory words you can try at home:

-Wow
-Yay
-Woohoo
-Oops, whoops, oopsie
-uh oh, oh no
-Weee
-Aw, man
-Ouch, owie
-Mmm, yum
-Yuck, ick, ew
-whoa

Tips for play to encourage exclamatory words:

- 1. Use a slow rate of speech** and short phrases.
- 2. Use toys and activities your child loves.** Be creative and find ways to model these sounds with their preferred toys and activities. For example, knock items off the table-oops! Uh Oh! Pretend babies or superheroes have a boo boo- Ouch! Oops!

3. Pause and wait. Don't require that your child imitate you by saying things such as "Say yay." Instead, slowly model the words through play, pause and wait and give your child the opportunity to say the word, and if they don't then model the word again.

4. Smile and have fun! Enjoy this time with your child. Your child learns best through interactions with others.