

When Should I be Concerned About my Child's Voice?

IF YOUR CHILD'S VOICE SOUNDS:

- Louder or softer than other children.
- Hoarse (as if he has laryngitis or a cold).
- Breathy or airy.
- Squeaky.
- Nasal (as if he is speaking through his nose).
- Stuffed up (without an obvious cold).
- Higher or lower than other children.

IF YOUR CHILD IS:

- Yelling all the time.
- Whispering all the time.
- Running out of breath when speaking.
- Clearing his throat or coughing too much.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM CONCERNED ABOUT MY CHILD'S VOICE?

- Talk to your family doctor about your concerns and ask for a referral to an Ear, Nose, and Throat doctor (ENT). Voice problems can sometimes be a symptom of a more severe problem. An ENT visit is highly recommended.
- See a Speech-Language Pathologist: Put in a referral to the York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program by calling 1-888-703-KIDS (5437).

WHAT DOES A SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST (SLP) DO?

- Consults with the ENT about his findings.
- Talks to you about your concerns and about the ENT findings.
- Evaluates your child's voice.
- Talks to you about how your child is using his voice on a daily basis.
- Teaches you and your child about healthier ways to use your voice.
- Works with you to help your child reduce unhealthy voice use.
- Provides fun activities for home practice.
- Evaluates your child's progress.
- May suggest you return to the ENT for a repeat assessment to make sure things are healing.

Reference: "When should I be concerned about my child's voice?" Beyond Words – Markham Stouffville Hospital.