

Tips for better public speaking

Preparing at Home

- **Talk to your child about how public speaking is a kind of performance.** He or she needs to speak in a way that holds the audience's attention.
- **Work on volume.** Many children speak much too quietly at first; you may have to encourage your child to speak in a loud, clear voice. Remind your child that he or she wants the audience to hear every word.
- **Consider speed.** Your child should speak slowly, but not so slowly that the audience gets bored. If he or she speaks too quickly, the audience will have trouble following the speech.
- **Remind your child to breathe.** Long speeches can be tiring, and if your child is nervous, he or she may be breathing too quickly and heavily. Encourage deep, slow breaths, which will calm your child down and make the speech clearer.
- **Emphasize the importance of eye contact.** Instruct your child to look at the audience members and connect with them. It's much less effective to stare at some imaginary point in the distance.
- **Pay attention to body language.** Help your child remember to stand up straight and speak calmly and loudly while looking at the audience. Hand gestures can help, but you also don't want your child to gesture nervously and wildly.
- **Brainstorm with your child about how to deal with difficult situations.** Your child may worry about someone in the audience being distracting or about not being able to keep the audience's attention. He or she may also be concerned about making a mistake. Encourage your child to simply smile and fix any errors he or she makes.
- **Build your child's confidence.** The best public speakers are confident speakers who know that they have mastered their material. Remind your child that he or she has a good speech and has practiced sufficiently to master it – he or she is prepared to succeed!
- **Practice, practice, practice.** This is the most important part of preparing for a speech. The more your child gives his or her speech the more fluent and comfortable he or she will be.

The Day of the Speech

- **Select appropriate clothing.** Your child needs to be dressed nicely. No blue jeans or t-shirts. It builds confidence to put on clean, attractive clothes. Have your child choose a favorite outfit, one that he or she feels happy and secure in.
- **Do one final rehearsal.** Let your child practice the speech one last time, maybe even wearing the right clothes. Emphasize how far your child has come and how strong this performance is.
- **Check and double check your child's materials.** Make sure that your child has everything he or she needs – the speech itself, note cards, etc. – before leaving the house.
- **Offer some final words of encouragement.** Tell your child that nervousness and stage fright are natural and normal, that these feelings are actually a good sign because it means that he or she is taking the speech seriously. Remind your child how hard he or she worked and how strong the speech has become.
- **Praise your child.** Tell your child before the performance that you are very proud; repeat this praise after the performance as well. Celebrate your child's success.

Adapted from the following reference:

wikiHow

<http://www.wikihow.com/Help-Your-Child-Prepare-to-Give-a-Speech>