

Voicing Your Concerns: Part One

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Your child's voicebox allows him to speak, sing, scream, imitate animals and favourite characters, shout, laugh and cry. Her voice expresses emotions and attitudes ranging from excitement to fear, surprise to anger, happiness to disgust.



Image from: <https://i.stack.imgur.com/Tc2rD.jpg>

But what exactly is voice?

The vocal cords (actually vocal folds) sit flat in the larynx (voicebox) at the height of the 'Adam's Apple' in a man's neck. When open, they look like a 'V', with the pointy end towards the front.

When we breathe, the vocal folds are open to let air enter and leave our lungs. To make sound, our vocal folds close and the air coming up from the lungs forces them to open and shut rapidly, ie. to vibrate. *Place your fingers on the front of your neck and say "aaaaah". Can you feel the vibrations?* These sounds travel up through the nose and mouth where they are shaped by movements of the tongue, palate (roof of the mouth), lips and jaw to create speech.

Check out this video to see inside the voicebox:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2pLJfWUjc8>

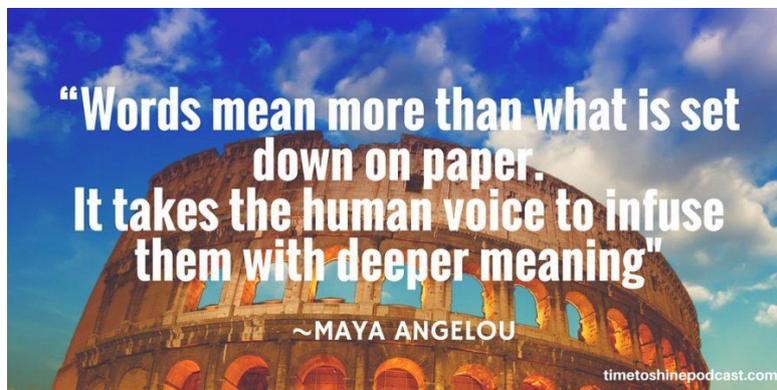


Image from: <http://www.timetoshinepodcast.com/6-great-quotes-power-voice/>

What can go wrong?

Problems can happen with one or more features of your child's voice:

- **Pitch** – how high or low the voice sounds (like musical notes)
- **Volume** – how loud or soft the voice is
- **Quality** – how the voice sounds (eg. croaky, strained, hoarse, breathy)
- **Resonance** – your child may sound as though she is speaking through a blocked nose (hyponasal) or has too much air coming down through the nose during speech (hypernasal)



Image from: <http://www.ourkids.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/kid-yelling-NO-600x.jpg>

Does my child have a voice problem?

Does your child's voice sound:

- Strained (heard in the voice or seen in straining neck muscles)?
- Breathily or hoarse?
- Rough?
- Croaky?
- Squeaky?
- Gurgly?
- Too high or too low?
- Too loud or too soft?

Is your child's breathing noisy? Has he ever said that it hurts to speak? Does she lose her voice regularly?



Image from: http://www.momonduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ariel-_ursula.jpg

There are many different kinds of [voice problems](#). [Our professional speech pathologists](#) are trained in assessing and managing individuals with [voice disorders](#). **If you have any [concerns about your child's voice](#), call 9899 5494 today to book an appointment with our voice specialist, Nicola Anglin.**

Stay tuned for **Voicing Your Concerns: Part Two...**

By Nicola Anglin (Speech Pathologist)