Voice Problems

Voice problems may cause a child’s voice to sound hoarse or breathy. Vocal misuse may actually cause your child to "lose" his voice. Voice problems are caused by many different things, such as bad voice habits, the environment, or medical reasons. Misusing the voice is a common cause of voice problems. Reflux and allergies can also affect the voice.

Help your child take care of his voice. Here are some things you can do for him:

- Don’t let him clear his throat, cough, or cry more than necessary.
- Don’t let him scream, yell, or whisper. Encourage him to talk in a normal tone.
- Don’t let him talk to people who are far away.
- Avoid letting him talk in "special effect" sounds such as motors, growling, high pitch sounds, etc.
- Don’t let him use a voice that is too high or too low.
- Have him drink plenty of water. Avoid caffeine in soda, tea, and coffee because it can dry out the tissue of the throat.
- Turn down the noise in your car and home. Turn off the televisions, radios, motors, dishwashers, and so on when you talk to your child.
- Don’t let him tighten his upper chest or throat as he speaks.
- Have him breathe with his stomach (diaphragm) – not with his shoulders and upper chest.
- Don’t smoke around your child.
- Have your child avoid dust and allergens.

If you have tried these things and your child is still having problems, contact your child’s doctor or speech/language pathologist for more testing.