

Early Language Development

Talking to your child

- Children learn language by listening to people talking.
- Talk about things as they happen in play and everyday activities e.g. bath time, shopping, baking and mealtimes.
- You can help by talking to your child in short simple sentences. E.g. "That's a blue car", "We're hanging up the washing", "You're riding your bike", "We're washing our hands", "That's a red balloon" etc.

Getting down to their level

- When talking or playing with your children get down to his or her level so you are face to face with them e.g. if they are playing on the floor, you get down on the floor and play with them.
- This will make communicating easier and more enjoyable for your child.

Giving Choices

- Give your child choices.
- You can do this throughout the day e.g. when getting dressed, playing, shopping or at snack time.
- Make sure your child can see the item they are choosing. This helps your child to learn the words of items and gives your child an opportunity to communicate.

Say it back the right way

- If your child says a word incorrectly, say it back the right way.
- Don't make your child repeat it.
- This will help your child to learn how to say the word correctly.

Sing to your child

- Singing nursery rhymes and action songs will help your child to listen and understand words.
- Repeat songs lots of times to your children so he or she becomes familiar with the words and learn what is coming next.
- Encourage your child to join in with the actions during the songs.

Talking and playing

- Try and have a special time with your child each day to play toys and read books.
- Talk to your child when you are playing/reading together.
- Try to reduce the number of questions you ask, instead comment on your child's play using simple language.
- Repeat the name of items for your child many times.
- This will help your child to learn new words.

Activities to try

Peekaboo

- Children love the anticipation of peekaboo.
- Great for learning to watch and wait.

- Use repetition of the same words to help the child learn.

Bubbles

- Encourage your child to look at you.
- Use words such as 'more' and 'pop pop pop'

Singing

- Songs and nursery rhymes are lots of fun for your child
- They love hearing the same tune over and over again.
- Make up actions to go with the songs, wait to see if your child copies you.

Books

- Look at the pictures together (without the need for emphasis on reading words)
- Talk about what you see
- Make fun noises and sounds to keep your child interested e.g. "brrm, went the car", "weeee, down the slide"

Balls

- Take turns throwing or rolling the ball
- Each time say "ready, steadygo"
- Wait for your child to look at you before rolling it back.

Stacking cups/building blocks

- Build towers together and knock them down
- Take it in turns to bang the bricks together
- Hide objects under the cups
- Use simple words, such as 'gone', 'bang bang' and 'fall down'

Top Tips to Talking

Special Time: Have some special quiet time with your child every day where you can enjoy playing and talking together. Talk to your child about what they are doing when they are playing.

Quiet Time: Houses are noisy places. Reduce the amount of noise by turning off the TV when you play with your child. It is easier for children to listen and learn without the extra background noise.

Face-to-face: Sit, kneel or lie so that your child can see your face when you are playing and talking together. Looking at each other will help your child understand how important talking is.

Help your child's speech and language to develop by giving them lots of praise and encouragement to build their confidence. By encouraging your children to communicate, you can help them to be the best talkers they can be!

Special Talking Time

Find 10 minutes every day for "Special Talking Time"

This needs to be:

- Just you and your child
- At a quiet time (TV turned off)

- When your child isn't tired or hungry
- When you can give your full attention to your child
- A dummy free time (an empty mouth makes talking easier)
- Fun!

Watching Television

- Choose programmes and videos carefully.
- Limit the amount of television your child watches.
- Watch TV together and talk about what is happening.
- Turn the television off when you are playing or reading with your child.
- Background noise makes it difficult to listen.

Books

Looking at books with your child is a good way to help develop their speech language.

Make sure it's "Special Talking Time":

- 1-to-1
- Quiet time
- When not hungry or tired
- No dummies!

Make sure you are face to face:

- On the floor
- At the table
- Sat on a chair

Watch and wait for your child's responses:

- Look at your child to see if they are interested
- Wait for your child to take a turn. This might be a gesture, a word or a noise.
- Show you are listening by giving eye contact and responding.

Make sure you:

- Use an animated voice
- Use gestures
- Use fun words
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Copy what your child is saying
- Comment on what your child is doing