

Speaking and Listening

Speaking

Good communication is essential for learning. It isn't only a foundation for reading and writing, it's also vital for children's social and emotional development. Good communication has a positive impact on behaviour too.

Many parents and carers worry if their child will be able to tell the teacher if they need something or if they will make friends. Good communication skills underpin these abilities.

Listening

Good pupils are great listeners. School involves a lot of listening, to their teacher and other adults, so practising good listening skills before your child starts school will help them get off to a great start.



Cwtch with a book (2+years)

Try and create an area or have a special box for storytelling. Get your child to choose the story.

REMEMBER: Make the area comfortable and calming while you read the story.

Sharing stories (2+years)

During story time, encourage the children to interact with the story by questioning them e.g. "what's happening in the picture?"

REMEMBER: Use simple stories with plenty of pictures

Active short stories (2+years)

Share short stories and encourage your child to act them out or repeat repetitive elements.e.g. The three little pigs - "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down". You could also make up actions for the story and encourage the children to join in with them.

REMEMBER: Use the same stories so that the children become familiar with the actions.

Active rhymes (2+years)

Make a nursery rhyme box with props such as masks, figures etc. While reciting/singing a nursery rhyme, encourage your child to use the props and act out the role. E.g. spider figure - 'Incy Wincy spider', Boat figure - 'Row, Row, Row your boat'.



Shopping game (3+years)

Play a shopping game where the child goes to find items for your shopping basket.

REMEMBER: If they can cope with one item, ask them to get 2 etc.

Treasure hunt (3+years)

Make a treasure hunt and give verbal directions to help your child find the objects.

REMEMBER: vary the complexity of the instruction according to ability.

MAKING DECISIONS

Give your child lots of opportunities to make decisions, give opinions and discuss their feelings. Would they prefer toast or cereal for breakfast? What are they most looking forward to about starting school?

SHARING PHOTOS

Looking at photos together is a good way to get conversation flowing. Your child will be interested in pictures of themselves when they were babies and old family photos from before they were born.

SHARING BOOKS

Children who are read to daily do better in all areas of learning. Don't limit reading to bedtime stories only, introduce your child to magazines, websites, catalogues, signs and recipes - these all provide opportunities for reading and discussions.



TALKING TOGETHER

Encourage your child to talk about what they've done today. Recount it back to someone e.g. Mum, Dad, sibling, Grandmother etc.

PUPPETS

Try some puppets. Speaking to or through a hand puppet can encourage children, especially the ones who are shy and troubled. It can help them voice their ideas and feelings they might otherwise find it hard to express.



ROLEPLAY

Whether it's dressing up, acting out real-life roles such as doctor or teachers or small world play, roleplay helps children develop their language and social skills.



BBC BITESIZE - How to talk to your child.