

Early Language Development

You don't need to be an expert to help your child develop good communication skills. All you need is a listening ear and the willingness to chat to your child whenever you can.

It's important to talk to you child.....

1. It will help your child learn to talk, as it is from listening to your voice that babies and children learn to use language.
2. It will stimulate your baby's or child's brain, helping to strengthen the connections that make learning possible.
3. It will help your child become a good reader and writer, because language skills form the foundation for literacy.
4. It will help your child develop social skills and good relationships.
5. It will show that you love and respect your child, enhancing self-esteem.
6. It will help the two of you form a close bond - communication is the basis of your relationship with each other.

Bath, Book, Bed

Routine helps children by giving them stability and enables them to know what to expect. A bedtime routine helps children understand that it is time to relax, and gives them a feeling of predictability and safety.

Children learn so much from snuggling up and listening to a story before bed – their vocabulary expands, their imagination develops and they learn about the world around them

Sharing a story at bedtime is a chance for you and your child to relax and enjoy a special moment together, giving them security and developing their confidence.

Children will benefit immensely if you read aloud with them, even once they have started to read themselves. They will learn new words that are beyond their reading ability and will love the time you spend with them. Try to read the books brought home from school and maybe borrow some from the library. Make it something to look forward to – and remember to have fun!

Top tips for talking with your child:

- Talk to your child when you're playing together.
- Get into their zone and talk about what they are looking at or playing with – they will learn language faster that way.
- Have fun with nursery rhymes and songs, especially those with actions.
- Encourage your child to listen to different sounds, such as cars and animals. This will help your child's listening skills.
- Gain your child's attention when you want to talk by using their name and getting eye contact
- Increase vocabulary by giving choices, e.g. "Do you want juice or milk?"
- Talk about things as they happen, e.g. when you're both unpacking the shopping.
- Listen carefully and give your child time to finish talking. Take turns to speak.
- Always respond in some way when your child says something.
- Help your child to use more words by adding to what they've said, e.g. if they said "ball" you might say, "Yes, it is a big, red ball."
- If your child says something incorrectly, say it back the right way, e.g. "Goggy bited it." "Yes, the dog bit it, didn't he?"
- Try and have special time with your child each day to play with toys and picture books.
- Limit TV time. When your child does watch TV, try to watch TV together so you can talk about what happens.

Singing songs and rhymes

Singing songs and rhymes with your child is really good for them, as the rhythms and repetitive language make it easier for babies to learn language skills. Your child will love hearing the same rhymes over and over again and will soon learn to join in with the actions. Singing and reciting with your child is also a great way of bonding with them.

Useful websites

Talking Point www.talkingpoint.org.uk

I CAN www.ican.org.uk

National Literacy Trust www.literacytrust.org.uk

Book Trust www.booktrust.org.uk