



Top 10 Tips to develop your child's speech and language

GET YOUR CHILD'S FULL ATTENTION FIRST

Get down to the child's level and engage their attention before speaking or asking a question – say their name to encourage them to stop and listen. Talking about what your child is interested in will also help to gain their attention.

MAKE LEARNING LANGUAGE FUN

Funny voices, rhymes, noises and singing all help children to learn language. Be silly – often the daftest things gain their attention

IMITATE CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE

With very young children, simply repeat back sounds, words and sentences. This demonstrates that you value all they say. This can be anything from “ba” to “Oh, you liked the apple?”

USE A FULL RANGE OF EXPRESSION

Speak in a lively, animated voice and use lots of gestures and facial expressions to back up your words – you'll give clues about what your words mean

USE SIMPLE, REPETITIVE LANGUAGE

Keep sentences short – as you talk about what is happening (“We're driving in the car” or “Wow, you're building a tower”)

MAKE IT EASY FOR YOUR CHILD TO LISTEN AND TALK

It is easier for your child to know what to listen to if your voice is not being masked by the television or music. Give your child quiet times to help them focus on your words. If your child uses a dummy, make sure that it is not in the way of their talking. Keep dummies to sleeptimes

BUILD ON WHAT CHILDREN SAY

Talk very clearly and add one or two words to your child's sentence – if your child says 'look car', you could say 'look, red car'

GIVE CHILDREN TIME TO RESPOND

Children often need time to put their thoughts together before answering, so give them longer to respond than you would with an adult

BE CAREFUL WITH QUESTIONS

Try not to ask too many questions, especially ones that sound like you're constantly testing the child, or where you already know the answer

DEMONSTRATE THE RIGHT WAY

Praise your child's efforts, even if the results aren't perfect – simply say the correct pronunciation rather than point out the mistake eg. Your child says “Look at the dod”, You can say “Yes, it's a dog”

Credit: Talking Point is the UK's most comprehensive source of information on all aspects of children's communication development

www.talkingpoint.org.uk