

10 TOP TIPS for talking

1. **Follow their lead:** *if you join in and talk about what your child is doing/looking at, it helps them to learn words more quickly.*
2. **Be face to face & get their attention first:** *young children find it difficult to listen while they are doing something. If they are busy playing they may find it hard to listen to what you are saying.*
3. **Put their message into words:** *when your child sends you a message (e.g. by reaching, pointing, looking, making a sound, etc), put into words what you think they are trying to tell you - say what you think they would say if they could. Keep it short, using a single word or short phrase to capture their message.*
4. **Build opportunities to communicate:** *if we anticipate our child's needs too quickly, we miss an opportunity to encourage our child to communicate. Remember to stop talking and wait to give your child an opportunity to start the communication first (by using sounds, actions or words).*
5. **Make language learning fun:** *when a child sees an adult playing around with sounds, words, and sentences they are more likely to try this out themselves. Try making fun sounds and words e.g. 'whee!' 'pop!' 'splash!'*
6. **Copy your child's sounds and actions:** *this lets your child know that you are listening to them and that you are interested in what they are saying. This encourages them to keep talking even if they are not using real words yet.*
7. **Use simple repetitive language:** *children find it difficult to understand long strings of words. It helps if you break instructions down and repeat words. Repetition also makes it easier for children to learn how to say words themselves.*
8. **Use gestures, actions, and demonstrations:** *speaking in a lively and animated way (using gestures and actions) will catch your child's attention and gives extra clues to help them understand what you are saying. Using touch, smell, taste, listening and sight helps your child to remember labels and actions.*
9. **Ask fewer questions:** *adults tend to ask lots of questions which can put pressure on a child to talk, and means they are less likely to learn new words. Try to avoid questions (e.g. 'what's that?') and make comments instead (e.g. 'car is driving!').*
10. **Offer choices:** *this allows an opportunity for you to label objects as the child sees them and creates an opportunity for them to communicate their choice with you.*

