



WORD OF MOUTH

Independent Speech and Language Therapist

Ten Top Tips for Developing Communication

1. **Make sure you have your child's attention.** It can be hard for children to listen if they are absorbed in another activity. Say your child's name first to get their attention and to make sure they are listening.
2. **Building vocabulary is essential.** Learning and remembering words is very important. Help your child by using all of their senses to teach new words (e.g. touching, smelling etc). Give lots of repetition and practice.
3. **Talk about what your child is interested in.** Children are much more motivated to talk when it is about something they are interested in. Ask an open question where the answer is not only yes or no.
4. **Build on what your child says.** Support your child to develop language to the next level. For example, take turns with babies, add words and describe those words with toddlers.
5. **Be careful with questions.** When adults use prompts and comments, children join in and talk more.
6. **Be a good language model.** If your child makes a mistake, it is better to repeat back what they said, clearly and with the right words than to tell them they are wrong. Children learn from what they see and hear.
7. **Give your child time to respond and listen to them.** Children need time to process what others have said, decide what they are going to say and how they are going to say it. Use facial expression to show you are listening and happy to wait.
8. **Make learning language fun.** Play with words, make up silly rhymes, and sing. Understanding how words are made up and rhyme also helps with learning to read.
9. **Check your child understands.** Encourage your child to ask when they are unsure. Ask your child if they understood. Can they tell you what they need to do?
10. **Have conversations.** Communication is a skill like any other; the more it is practised the better it gets. Your child will benefit from practising having conversations with adults as well as with people their own age.

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