



Get Talking

Advice sheets for parents

Get Talking

How can I help my child to be a good talker?

Talking is important for life:

- for making and keeping friends
- telling people what you want
- asking for help
- getting your point across
- getting on well at school
- expressing feelings



Get Talking

How can I encourage my child with talking?

Here are some ideas to help your child with talking:

- Use your child's name to get their attention, before you start talking to them.
- Make sure your child is looking at you when you are talking.
- Talk about what is happening as you are doing it e.g. while cooking, shopping, playing.
- It's best to use a mixture of comments, and just a few questions.
- Make the most of chances to chat, such as meal times, in the car, bath times, bed times.
- Use short simple sentences.
- Allow your child time to respond (count to 5 in your head).
- Give your child opportunities to speak.
- Stop and listen to show you are interested in what they are saying.
- Respond to questions that your child asks.



- Try not to correct your child when they talk. Let them finish and gently say it back the right way e.g. "I swammed very well Mummy" " Yes, you swam very well".
- Try not to interrupt your child when they are talking.
- Talk about what is happening in books, including looking at the pictures.
- Read fun books to your child. Try your library for exciting, new books.
- Try to reduce the amount of time that the TV or radio is on. Young children find it difficult listening to two things at once.
- Reduce the amount of time that your child is playing on the computer or on games consoles such as the PS3 or DS.
- If you are watching TV or playing computer games, try to do it together and talk about what is happening
- Tell your child what you like when you see them doing something well.

Get Talking

What activities can I do to help my child with talking?

Try to spend time each day doing a fun activity with your child, and talking about what you are doing. Remember, it's best to use a mixture of comments with just a few questions.

Here are some ideas you could try!

- pretend play e.g. mums and dads, going on holiday, playing shops, going on a bus.
- small toy play e.g. play people, playmobil, puppets, farm animals.
- creative play e.g. playdough, making cards, beads, painting.
- construction play e.g. lego, sticklebricks, wooden bricks.
- simple board games e.g. picture lotto, picture pairs, snakes and ladders.
- sharing books e.g. story CDs, looking at picture books, listening to stories.
- trips out e.g. to the park, to the local shops, to the library, to feed the ducks.



Get Talking

How can I help my child with attention & listening?

Below are some more ideas to help your child with their attention and listening skills. Remember to use all of the advice on the Get Talking page 2 sheet as well.

- Before a child can develop language skills they need to learn to listen.
- Use your child's name before you start talking to them.
- Reduce the number of distractions in the room e.g. tidy up other exciting toys while you are trying to do an activity with your child.
- Reduce the background noise in the room. Switch off the TV or radio.
- Keep your language simple by using short sentences and easy words.
- Remember to repeat important information.
- Use gestures, pointing and facial expressions to make your words more visual.
- Do an activity for a short period e.g. 5 minutes and then have a break, before doing another activity.
- Gradually build up the time you spend on an activity with your child.
- Praise your child when you see them listening or concentrating.



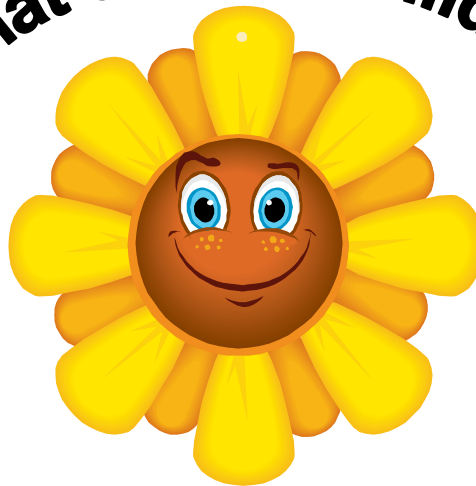
Listening and attention

- Children enjoy listening to longer stories.
- They still find it difficult to concentrate on more than one thing at a time, like playing and listening.

Talking

- Children can use sentences of four to six words.
- They use the past and future tenses, but may continue to have problems with irregular words, such as “*runned*” for “*ran.*”
- They can start conversations with others and can take turns when talking.

What can my child do



at 4 years?

Making speech sounds

- They might still make a few mistakes with speech sounds such as l/r/w/y, f/th, s/sh/ch/j.

Understanding

- Children can understand questions and instructions with two separate parts, like: “*Get your jumper and stand by the door.*”
- They can understand the question “*why?*”
- They start to understand the idea of time - yesterday, today - though they might not have these words yet.

Listening and attention

- Children can understand and follow instructions without stopping what they're doing to listen.

Making speech sounds

- They may have problems with harder sounds such as “*th*”, “*r*” and three consonant combinations like “*scribble*.”

What can my child do



at 5 years?

Talking

- Children use well formed sentences but there may still be some immaturities.
- They can explain the meaning of simple words.
- They begin to ask the meaning of words they are not sure of and might try to use them.
- They can ask for information, discuss feelings and ideas, and give opinions.

Understanding

- Children can follow a simple story without pictures.
- They are beginning to understand instructions containing sequencing words, such as “*first*” ... “*after*” ...
- They understand time in relation to daily routines: “*After lunch we will do games.*”

Listening and attention

- Children can concentrate for longer.
- They can listen better with one other person or in a group.

Making speech sounds

- Their speech is generally clear, though they may make little mistakes, and they are more confident in their talking.

What can my child do



at 6 years?

Talking

- Children can tell a story that involves different characters and objects.
- They have lots of ways of describing things and can say which objects belong to different categories and why - e.g. Lego & ball are toys; chicken & cow are farm animals.
- They can use language to consider and explain things, for example to think about why things have happened or what might happen next.

Understanding

- Children understand more words for subjects and activities in school.
- They understand longer and more complex sentences, for example: “The dog was chased by the cat,” and “The boy, with the brown hair, is called Jack.”
- They begin to understand jokes.