



Play and Early Language

TALKING AND PLAYING
TOGETHER IS ONE OF THE BEST
WAYS TO HELP DEVELOP YOUR
CHILD'S LANGUAGE



How can playing help my child's talking?

Young children learn best through play. Children learn to link words to objects, actions and concepts through their play. They also learn about sharing, interacting, and communicating with others. Children learn through copying the world around them and will often copy your actions around the house. They will soon begin to copy you in play.

Ideally you should try to put aside 5 minutes a day to focus on this type of activity with your child.

The sessions should be led by the child. The focus is on modelling language and play for them. Below are some tips and strategies to use.

- ✓ **Get down on your child's level** – This will mean they can see your face and will help them learn more about communicating. It will also help you to notice what they are looking at and interested in.
- ✓ **Follow your child's lead in play** – Play with the toys your child chooses. Try not to tell your child what to do in the game – see what they do first and join in.
- ✓ **Extend their play** – e.g. pretend to drink from a cup if your child is holding a tea cup.
- ✓ **Add words** – Talk about what your child is looking at or doing.
- ✓ **Use simple language** – If your child is not yet using any words, choose one word or even a sound to comment. For example: 'down', 'Ready steady go', 'WOW', or 'wheel!'

Things to remember...

- Try not to ask too many questions.
Questions reduce the amount of language children use.
- Let your child start the talking – with a look, an action or a word.
It's OK to play in silence for a while.
- Repeat the words/ vocalisations your child uses.
- Add words to expand on what they're saying.
E.g. *If your child says "cat", you can say "yes black cat!"*
- Make sure you label verbs as your child plays as well as nouns
E.g. "oh the dog is jumping"
- Use new words again and again – repetition is good!
- Use new words in different situations
E.g. 'duck' in a book, playing with toy farm, visit to a pond...