

How to help at home

- Read books to your child and talk about it as you go along
 - What do you think will happen?
 - What do you like about the story?
 - What does XXX word mean?
- Talk about the school day, friends, special events, journeys, what you see around etc
- Tell jokes
- Sing along to the radio and CD's together
- Encourage your child to look at you when you talk
- Play games such as eye spy
- Give instructions for example please get me the xxx
- Model good listening by looking at them
- Try not to finish your child's sentences
- Use the correct words, for example dog not doggy, horse not horsey
- Encourage them to express their opinions
- Praise them for using adventurous language

Helping Your Child with Speaking and Listening



Why are Speaking and Listening so Important?

Speaking and listening are at the heart of children's learning. Children need to be confident communicators and active listeners in order to learn about the world they live in. Language skills are crucial, and children begin to develop these skills from birth.

At school children are taught to:

- Think about what they say
 - Choose the right words
- Listen to others before they speak
 - Talk to others
 - Share ideas

'Listening and Speaking are the roots of reading and writing'
(Ofsted 2005)

Developing Listening

Speaking and listening go hand in hand. Listening skills are important for all sorts of reasons. Here are some ways to develop your child's listening skills:

- Story tapes, songs and rhymes in the car and elsewhere
- Children's radio
- Ask them to follow clear simple instructions
- Give them the opportunity to make choices - 'Would you like to wear a blue jumper or a red one today?'
- Take turns in conversations with them and encourage them to listen to your contribution.
- Play language games - like 'I-Spy', '20 questions', 'What am I?', 'Continue the story' - you start a story, the children carry on.
- Enjoy telling jokes and encourage the re-telling of them.
- Encourage the use of the telephone - within reason!
- Take time to answer your child's questions - model being a good listener!

Parents' Role

Parents and carers play a crucial role in developing children's communication skills.

From the moment of birth parents are a child's first teachers and provide a powerful example of good communication.

Research shows that even very tiny babies understand the rules of conversation and can 'take turns' in communicating with an adult, by copying facial expressions for example.

Conversation with parents has been found to be one of the most important factors influencing children's achievement.



A Good Speaker...

...uses good vocabulary

...speaks in a clear voice

...is clear about what they mean

...makes a longer contribution than just one or two words

...makes eye contact with the listener

...uses facial expression and gestures

Developing Talk

From the very earliest stages parents are teaching their children to communicate - through playing, chatting, singing, commenting and questioning parents are modelling speaking all the time.

Here are some ways to develop your child's speaking skills:

- **Make time to talk to your child**
- **Encourage your child to talk**
 - Listen patiently
- **Actively encourage longer conversations.**
 - Asking questions
 - Be a good role model

Good Listeners...

...make eye contact with the speaker

...listen carefully

...respond appropriately to the speaker.

...ask relevant questions

...turn the body to face the person who is speaking

...turn off distracting noises such as the radio or television