

Let's Talk

- * **Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing**
- * **The more your child talks, the more able they will be at reading and writing**
- * **And the better they are at reading and writing, the better their life chances**
- * **By encouraging and supporting your child's speech, you are shaping their future**

Here are our top tips for developing talk, whatever your child's level:

➤ **Let your child take the lead then expand and extend:**

- Listen to what your child is talking about and **extend** their words by putting them in a sentence eg. child: 'dog playing,' adult: 'the dog is playing'
- Then make the sentence even better and **expand** their vocabulary: 'The fluffy dog is playing with the shiny ball.'
- Be specific, **use the proper words** eg. 'put it over there' = 'can you hang your coat on the hook, please' or 'can you put the banana in the fruit bowl, please.'
- If they mispronounce or miss out a sound, repeat the word with emphasis on this part, but don't get them to repeat eg. child: 'the shock is reen,' adult: 'yes, the **sock** is **green**', 'I **made** a cake with the playdough!' 'You **made** a cake with the playdough.'

Every conversation is an opportunity to improve your child's speech. So make it count!

This can be done at any level of fluency. If your child speaks in full sentences, give them different words for saying the same thing eg. big = huge, enormous, massive, immense.

➤ **Model thinking aloud**

- This encourages your child to **voice what they are doing**, is hugely important in the development of speech and **helps them to sequence and organise** their thoughts and actions eg. I'm chopping the carrots first and then I'm putting them in the saucepan / now let's put on our coats, then we'll open the door and walk to nursery.
- If your child does not think aloud in their play, then model it for them, eg. adult 'the train is moving down the track, now it's approaching the bridge, will it get up the slope ... yes!'
- Think aloud **when sharing a story** – 'I wonder why the mummy pig told all her piglets to leave home when there's a wolf ...' Let your child see that you don't have all the answers, that you want to hear what they have to say eg. 'I don't think I'd like to live in a stick house, it might be very spiky. What do you think?'
- Avoid asking questions that require a 'yes' 'no' answer. Instead, make comments that encourage your child to share their thinking, 'Oooh, I'd like to stroke that tiger' 'I hope the dinosaur isn't hungry!'
- By thinking aloud, **children develop the language for narrative**, or story telling in its simplest form. Children need to talk about what they are doing in practical terms to go on to develop imaginative story telling in their pretend play and later in written form.

➤ **Model making links between experiences**

- Making connections deepens your child's understanding of the world and will give them more language for describing what is happening and creating the narrative eg. adult, 'I remember when we collected sticks in the park.'

➤ **Sharing a story has the biggest impact on your child's language development so read every day and sing rhymes every day. Repeat the same stories and rhymes and listen to your child's language grow. READING IS THE ROCKET FUEL FOR LANGUAGE!**