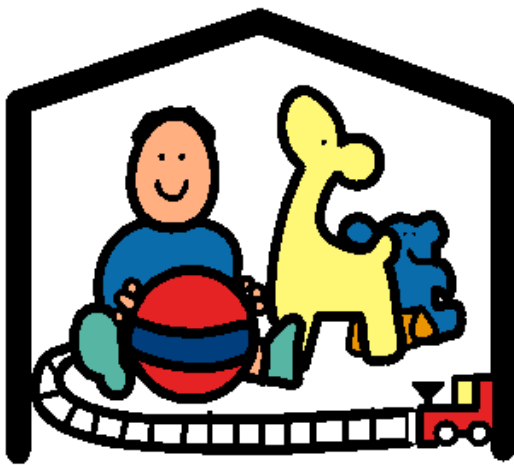




# Communication in Early Years Settings









March 2021 To be reviewed in March 2022

The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC.  
All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission



# Contents

Information on typical communication development	3
Communication Strategies	9
 Interaction	10
 Attention and Listening	16
 Play	18
 Understanding	20
 Talking	26
 Speech Sounds	34

## Appendices

1. Stammering and the Under 5s	40
2. Frequently Asked Questions on Bilingual Children	32
3. Top 10 Tips	44
4. Screen Time	49
5. Dummies and speech	50
6. Communication High 5	51
7. Useful websites and links	52
8. Parent Information Sessions	53
9. Contacts	54

# Information on Typical Development in Children; Development of Speech & Language

<u>Age</u>	<u>Looking &amp; Listening</u>	<u>Symbolic Play</u>	<u>Understanding</u>	<u>Talking</u>	<u>Size of Vocabulary</u>	<u>Speech Sounds</u>
<b>6 months</b>	Can pay fleeting attention, but any new event will distract	Mouthing, inspecting, hitting, shaking of objects	Responds to different tones of voice	Babbles for attention. Sound play with familiar adults	<b>0</b>	Variety of consonant – vowel combinations
<b>12 months</b>	Concentrates on the most powerful stimulus (visual OR auditory)	Relates objects appropriately e.g. puts spoon in cup, brushes own hair	Understands own name, 'no' and several other words	Babble that sounds like real words often precedes the use of real words. First words are closely related to child's own world and functional needs	<b>1 – 3</b>	Simplified sound system. Consonant such as b, d, g, m, n, w predominate
<b>18 months</b>	Will attend to own choice of activity but will not tolerate intervention	Begins to recognise pictures of familiar objects. Recreates own or others' actions e.g. puts doll in bed; feeds teddy	Follows simple commands in context and instructions containing 1 key word e.g. 'where's your <u>eyes</u> ?' Understands mainly naming words e.g. shoe; ball	Single words. Vocabulary used in a variety of ways to convey different meanings	<b>10 - 20</b>	
<b>2 years</b>			Understands instructions containing 2 key words e.g. 'give the <u>apple</u> to <u>teddy</u> '. Understands basic action words e.g. jump; sleep	Using 2 word phrases. Asking 'what's this?' 'where's...?' etc	<b>50 +</b>	Sound system extending. Consonants include p, b, t, d, k, g, m, n, w
<b>2 ½ years</b>	Child can concentrate by looking OR listening. Can attend to adult's choice of activity for short period with frequent prompts	Pretend action in sequence e.g. kisses dolly, puts dolly in cot, covers dolly, rocks cot		Using 3 – 4 word phrases and simple sentences. Starting to use past tense e.g. 'me falled over'	<b>200 +</b>	Starting to use sh, f, s occasionally

Please note this is a guideline, all children are individuals and develop at their own rate.



# Development of Speech & Language

<u>Age</u>	<u>Looking &amp; Listening</u>	<u>Symbolic Play</u>	<u>Understanding</u>	<u>Talking</u>	<u>Size of Vocabulary</u>	<u>Speech Sounds</u>
<b>3 years</b>	Child can concentrate by looking OR listening. Can attend to adult's choice of activity for longer period, needing less frequent prompts	As above: Pretend action in sequence e.g. kisses dolly, puts dolly in cot, covers dolly rocks cot	Understands instructions containing 3 key words e.g. 'give the <u>cup</u> and <u>spoon</u> to <u>teddy</u> ' Understands basic describing words e.g. big, cold and position words e.g. in, under Understands some time concepts e.g. yesterday, this morning Beginning to understand negatives and plurals e.g. can't, cats	Using 4 – 6 word sentences, able to use most sentence types. Over-generalisation of grammatical rules occurring.	<b>500 – 1000</b>	All vowel sounds are present. Consonant sounds like s, f, sh, z, v, ch are used in simple contexts
<b>4 years</b>	Attention is still single channelled but child can control their focus and shift from listening to doing. The child begins to 'take on board' spoken instructions related to a task he / she is engaged upon without needing to interrupt the task to look at the speaker	Co-operative play with other children beginning to occur	Understands instructions containing 4 key words e.g. 'put the <u>little brick</u> <u>under</u> the <u>box</u> ' Understands questions starting with 'when?' and 'why?'	Average sentence length is 5 – 8 words but uses some longer utterances. Asking lots of wh- questions	<b>1000 - 1500</b>	Uses s, f, sh etc consistently. Still reducing consonant clusters e.g. sp, fl, shr
<b>5 years</b>	Integrated looking and listening well established and maintained from 5 +		Understands everyday conversations unless ambiguous. Beginning to understand jokes, puns. Developing powers of reasoning and criticism.	8 + words in a sentence. Can relate simple stories. Uses past, present and future tense	<b>1500 -2000</b>	Using most sounds correctly except th, r, more difficult clusters and multi-syllabic words e.g. squirrel, escalator

Please note this is a guideline, all children are individuals and develop at their own rate.

# Speech Sound Checklist

	90% of children
<b>All common vowel sounds</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<p>[p]     <u>p</u>an, shee<u>p</u></p> <p>[b]     <u>b</u>all, cra<u>b</u></p> <p>[t]     <u>t</u>eddy, lett<u>e</u>r</p> <p>[d]     <u>d</u>og, be<u>d</u></p> <p>[m]     <u>m</u>ouse, m<u>u</u>mm<u>y</u></p> <p>[n]     <u>n</u>ose, ba<u>n</u>ana</p> <p>[w]     <u>w</u>ellies</p>	<b>3 years</b>
<p>[k]     <u>c</u>at, <u>k</u>ey, ro<u>ck</u>et</p> <p>[g]     <u>g</u>o, do<u>g</u></p> <p>[f]     <u>f</u>eet, kni<u>f</u>e</p> <p>[h]     <u>h</u>ouse</p> <p>[y]     <u>y</u>es</p> <p>[s]     <u>s</u>oap, dre<u>s</u>s</p> <p>[ng]    ki<u>ng</u></p>	<b>5 years</b>
<p>[sh]    <u>sh</u>oe, fi<u>sh</u></p> <p>[ch]    <u>ch</u>in, ket<u>ch</u>up</p> <p>[j]     <u>j</u>oke, bri<u>dg</u>e</p> <p>[z]     <u>z</u>oo, bee<u>s</u></p> <p>[v]     <u>v</u>an, lea<u>v</u>es</p> <p>[l]     <u>l</u>ion, be<u>ll</u></p>	<b>6 years</b>
<p>[r]     <u>r</u>ain, bea<u>r</u></p> <p>[th]    <u>th</u>in, ba<u>th</u></p> <p>[th]    fea<u>th</u>er</p> <p>[zh]    mea<u>sh</u>ure</p>	<b>7 years</b>

Based on research by Ann Lock

These are the ages when 90% of children will use these sounds.

# Child Development Guide

Age	Understanding	Talking	Cognition	Motor	Social/Behaviour
<b>0-12 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speaking quiets the infant</li> <li>distinguishes between intonation patterns and syllables</li> <li>begins to respond to 'no'</li> <li>understands simple requests ('want more')</li> <li>distinguishes words</li> <li>understands words that represent objects, people or activities that appear frequently in child's daily routine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coos or gurgles</li> <li>cries for different wants or needs</li> <li>babbles and uses inflected vocal play</li> <li>imitate sounds and uses jargon</li> <li>produces single word utterances (1-10 word total)</li> <li>uses mostly gesture with some vocalisation</li> <li>early vocabulary ('dada', 'mamma', 'doggie', 'hi')</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>grasp and can hold 2 objects</li> <li>picks up objects with thumb and finger tips</li> <li>scribbles</li> <li>drinks from cup</li> <li>eats with spoon</li> <li>walks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tracks people, grasps and smiles</li> <li>stops crying only when certain people hold him/her or when s/he hears mum</li> <li>makes calling sounds to attract mum's attention</li> <li>stays close by mum, uses mum as a base to explore</li> <li>crawls toward person if person moves away</li> <li>focuses on people s/he is attracted to</li> <li>climbs towards mum to seek comfort and security</li> <li>will leave mum to explore</li> <li>plays 'pat-a-cake'</li> </ul>
<b>12-18 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>follows 1 key word (e.g. where are your <i>shoes</i>)</li> <li>understands commands e.g. 'stop that', 'don't do that', 'don't touch'</li> <li>points to body parts, clothing, toys on requests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acquires 10-20 single words of vocabulary</li> <li>names, requests, commands and rejects things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engages in fantasy play</li> <li>investigates relation between cause and effect e.g. identifies button to activate toy such as jack-in-the-box</li> <li>actively problem solves</li> <li>puts objects into containers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>walks alone</li> <li>eats with spoon</li> <li>reaches in smooth continuous way</li> <li>throws ball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>greet people but will also display moods</li> <li>takes favourite toy to bed</li> <li>waves bye-bye</li> <li>plays games on request (peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake)</li> <li>says 'thank you'</li> </ul>
<b>18-24 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognises names of familiar objects, person, pets</li> <li>watches person's face for cues</li> <li>follows 2 level commands successfully e.g. 'bring the <i>nappy</i> and your <i>shoes</i>'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>combines two words e.g. 'want more', 'big doggie'</li> <li>vocabulary approximately 50 words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>begins to match colours</li> <li>symbolic understanding and representational thought beginning to develop e.g. will use old boxes as space rockets etc</li> <li>finds objects hidden under cups</li> <li>less trial and error behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>turns handful of pages</li> <li>climbs into adult chair</li> <li>feeds self</li> <li>carries doll</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>leads adult to what is wanted</li> <li>follows another child's actions</li> <li>helps undress/dress self</li> <li>hugs</li> </ul>

Please note this is a guideline, all children are individuals and develop at their own rate.

<b>2-2½ years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• moves from one location to another on request</li> <li>• recognises some names of relatives, friends</li> <li>• identifies some body parts on self</li> <li>• follows 2 level commands (get the <i>nappy</i> and your <i>shoes</i>)</li> <li>• understands basic actions e.g. jump, sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refers to self by name and gives name on request</li> <li>• recites portion of nursery rhymes/songs</li> <li>• uses 2-3 word utterances</li> <li>• asks 'why' and 'what' questions</li> <li>• vocabulary approximately 300 words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remembers where toys are kept</li> <li>• places 3 objects in rotated form board</li> <li>• sorts toys for play</li> <li>• removes lid from box or jar</li> <li>• pulls mat to get object</li> <li>• builds a 6 block tower</li> <li>• releases toy on command</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• descends stairs/ladders without holding on</li> <li>• jumps on the spot two or more times</li> <li>• confines scribble to page</li> <li>• turns one page at a time</li> <li>• jumps from bottom step to floor</li> <li>• opens doors</li> <li>• wiggles tongue or thumb in imitation</li> <li>• strings large beads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• separates without a tantrum</li> <li>• able to wait for a few minutes for gratification</li> <li>• dramatises adult activities</li> <li>• assertive – resists and persists</li> <li>• offers object without wanting it back</li> <li>• warmly responsive to adult</li> <li>• likes stories about self</li> <li>• listens to stories/nursery rhymes read from book</li> </ul>
<b>2½ - 3 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands instructions containing 3 key words e.g. 'give the <i>cup</i> and <i>spoon</i> to <i>teddy</i>'</li> <li>• understand basic describing words e.g. big, cold and position words e.g. in , under, on</li> <li>• understands some time concepts e.g. yesterday this morning</li> <li>• beginning to understand negatives and plurals e.g. can't cats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using 4-6 word sentences, able to use most sentence types</li> <li>• over-generalisation of grammatical rules occurring</li> <li>• asks simple 'wh' questions, uses negation, use '-ing', plural 's', '-ed'</li> <li>• answers questions (e.g. 'what do you do when you're hungry/thirsty/sleepy?')</li> <li>• uses two words to express possession (e.g. 'my shoes')</li> <li>• names three liquids to drink</li> <li>• vocabulary approximately 800 words</li> <li>• pragmatic (social use of language) – converses in dialogues, asks and answers questions, will role play</li> <li>• onset of dysfluency may be observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual memory for one picture</li> <li>• copies horizontal row of 3 blocks, drawing circle/vertical/horizontal line</li> <li>• strings 3 or more beads</li> <li>• completes a two-part puzzle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stands on one foot for 2 seconds</li> <li>• climbs up and slides down a four foot slide</li> <li>• pulls sock off</li> <li>• good hand and finger co-ordination (holds pencil with thumb and forefinger)</li> <li>• throws ball from above the head and in a given direction</li> <li>• walks up stairs (alternative feet)</li> <li>• turns pages of a book , one by one</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greets familiar adults spontaneously</li> <li>• likes to perform for others</li> <li>• shows pride in achievements</li> <li>• avoids dangerous or unpleasant situation</li> <li>• plays interactive games</li> <li>• calls attention to his/her performance</li> <li>• displays imagination</li> <li>• understand concept of taking turns but not always agreeable</li> </ul>

Please note this is a guideline, all children are individuals and develop at their own rate.

<b>3-4 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand instructions containing 4 key words e.g. 'put the <i>little brick under the box</i>'</li> <li>• understands questions starting with 'when?' and 'why?'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• average sentence length is 5-8 words but uses some longer utterances</li> <li>• asking lots of 'wh-' questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has ability to make something represent something that is not present</li> <li>• engages in imaginative play where the child takes an object (pencil) and pretends it is something else (magic wand)</li> <li>• can reason (child is faced with a situation experienced before and reasons) before solving the situation</li> <li>• begins to classify objects according to shape, colour and size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pedals tricycle</li> <li>• swings when started</li> <li>• climbs up and down a slide</li> <li>• uses scissors</li> <li>• kicks ball when rolled toward child</li> <li>• traces template</li> <li>• walks on tip toes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sings and dances to music</li> <li>• follows rules by imitating others</li> <li>• greets familiar adults without reminders</li> <li>• asks permission to take turns</li> </ul>
<b>4-5 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands everyday conversation unless ambiguous</li> <li>• beginning to understand jokes, puns</li> <li>• developing powers of reasoning and criticism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8+ words in a sentence</li> <li>• can relate simple stories</li> <li>• uses past, present, and future tense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knows that amounts of liquids presented in twin beakers hold same amount of liquid</li> <li>• picks up specified number of objects (1-5) when asked</li> <li>• builds pyramid of 10 blocks in imitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• draws head, trunk and 4 limbs of a man</li> <li>• stands on one foot for up to 8 seconds</li> <li>• walks balance beam</li> <li>• makes clay shapes of 2-3 parts</li> <li>• pedals tricycle</li> <li>• draws simple picture (house, tree, man)</li> <li>• pastes simple shapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reciprocal relationship or goal-directed partnership</li> <li>• child perceived mum as a separate person with his own goals</li> <li>• asks permission and for assistance</li> <li>• apologises</li> </ul>
<b>5-6 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands most speech &amp; language forms, vocabulary and pragmatic intents</li> <li>• asks and answers 'who, what, when, where' questions appropriately</li> <li>• counts four objects</li> <li>• gives basic colours and body parts</li> <li>• prints name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vocabulary – 2500 words</li> <li>• names penny, 10p, £1</li> <li>• recites days of week in order</li> <li>• tells month and day of birthday</li> <li>• Rote counting to 100</li> <li>• Pragmatics (social use of language) – some imaginative thinking but realistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrange objects in sequences of width and length</li> <li>• puts numerals 1-10 in proper sequence</li> <li>• adds and subtracts combinations to 3</li> <li>• can predict what happens next</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• copies complex drawings</li> <li>• skips</li> <li>• copies small letters</li> <li>• folds paper</li> <li>• rides bike</li> <li>• jumps rope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share feelings</li> <li>• explains game rules to others</li> <li>• comforts others in distress</li> <li>• chooses own friends</li> <li>• acts out stories</li> </ul>

Please note this is a guideline, all children are individuals and develop at their own rate.





# Communication Strategies



The following pages contain useful Information and strategies to support children's skills in each area of speech and language development



# Interaction

Good interaction skills lay the basis for good communication skills but what happens if a child is not interested in interacting with others? Think about their child style - own agenda, shy and passive children may need a little help to interact and take turns in play as well as in conversation.

There can be many reasons why children have poor interaction skills. The reasons why are usually less important than trying to develop their skills.

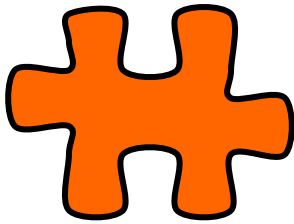
Children who haven't had lots of opportunities to interact with others may not know the rules of interaction and may be passive or attention seeking.

Children with a developmental delay will be at an earlier stage of development and their limited language might make it harder to join in group play.

Children with an autism spectrum disorder have recognised difficulties with social interaction, social communication, imagination and flexibility – e.g. may actively avoid others, be too keen to monopolise, get stuck on only playing in one area, may be non verbal.

Children with an attachment disorder may seek to provoke strong reactions in their audience such as anger, sympathy, support and/or approval. They may make persistent attempts to interact with adults or older children rather than with age peers and they may initiate interactions with others which allow them frequently to play the same role (e.g. as the victim, as the bully).

Here are some strategies to try...



## Try Some 'Quiet Time'

Sometimes in a busy and noisy environment it can be difficult to really understand what a child's communication skills are like. Children who are less confident with their communication skills may find it difficult to initiate interaction and build a good rapport with adults and their peers. Only after this good rapport is established will the child feel confident enough to interact and initiate. One of the ways to help develop this relationship would be to build in some "**Quiet Time**".

- Pick 10 minutes when you know there will be few interruptions.
- Try to choose a quiet area where there won't be too many distractions.
- Encourage the child to choose a toy they would like to play with.
- Tell the child that this is their special playtime when they can choose what they want to do.
- During these 10 minutes follow the child's lead, observing and interacting with them according to what they are doing. Make comments on what you are observing (e.g. using simple language to describe what the child is doing with the toy). Be aware that you are not asking too many questions or directing their play.
- After the 10 minutes are finished reflect on what you saw the child do, for example, did they vocalise or say more, did they look at you more, did they copy or repeat what you said.
- As the weeks progress note any changes in development.



# Golden Rules for Interaction (1)

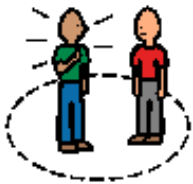
encourage eye contact



## Encourage eye contact

Getting your child's attention and encouraging eye contact will help to develop two-way interaction and communication.

encourage turn-taking



## Encourage turn-taking

Turn-taking is basic to interaction and communication, it is a social skill and requires consideration for others. Some children need to be taught how to take turns either non-verbally or verbally, perhaps using a motivating toy or activity. It is important to have realistic expectations of your child's turn-taking abilities, if s/he cannot take turns with one adult, s/he will not be able to take turns in a group of children. Use brief but regular opportunities during the day to practise.

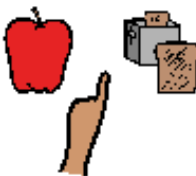
reduce your language



## Reduce your language

Be detectives - identify your child's level of understanding and reduce your own language to match this, for some children this will be single words, for others it may be short sentences. As your child's understanding develops you can then increase the complexity of your own language.

give choices



## Give choices

By giving your child a restricted choice, perhaps using objects/symbols, you can help him/her understand and respond appropriately. Rather than "What do you want to eat?" offer visual and restricted choices, "Do you want biscuit or apple?"

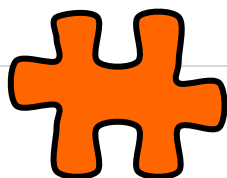
use your child's name



## Use your child's name first, to get attention

You need your child's attention if s/he is going to understand what you say. Make a habit of using your child's name first and don't assume that s/he knows that "everyone/all" includes him or her.

The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC.  
All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission



## Golden Rules for Interaction (2)

give time to process



### Give time to process – remember to wait.

Spoken language is difficult for some children to process; you need to give them extra time - sometimes counting to a particular number (five, ten, or even twenty) helps you to remember to wait and gives your child the extra time they need.

use first and then



### Use 'first and then'

A way to help your child understand the concept of time and sequence of events is to use the word "then" to link what will happen, e.g. "Shoes on, then coat, then play outside."

use finished



### Use 'finished'

Unlike the word "NO", finished can be both positive and negative. Praise and reward your child when an activity is finished, e.g. "Good boy, dinner finished, now ice-cream!" Once s/he understands the word in positive situations, you can use it more negatively to finish less desired activities or behaviours. Accompanying the word with a sign may be useful for some children and will help develop a concept of time and a calm response to a change in activities.

say things in order



### Say things in the order they will happen

Your child is likely to understand and do things in the order in which you say them, e.g. "Put your coat on, then go in the car, then go swimming," rather than, "We will go swimming if you put your coat on and get in the car."

use positive language



### Tell your child what to do rather than what NOT to do

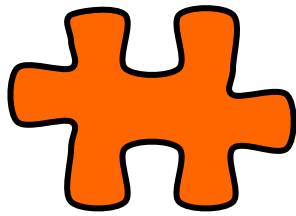
Using positive language will help your child respond more positively to problematic situations. Avoid the tantrum-producing "NO" when possible, e.g. "Sit on the chair" rather than, "No! Stop jumping on the chair, you will break it."

use visuals



### Use visual ways to support understanding

Some children are visual learners so it is useful to use visual clues to help them understand. Tone of voice or facial expression are not generally helpful, but gestures, objects and symbols can support your verbal instructions and can be referred to repeatedly to check what was communicated.



## Using our language successfully – The Rules

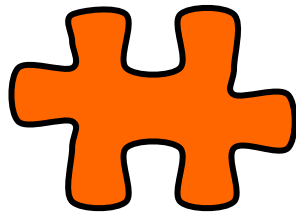
Without even realising it, we understand and follow rules to help us use our language successfully in everyday life.

These rules involve:

- The ability to wait your turn both in conversation and play and to let other people have a turn
- Knowing how much information to give
- Knowing when and when not to change a subject
- Knowing how to use language for different purposes such as asking questions, telling stories, explaining
- Knowing the body language that goes with speech e.g. eye contact, body positioning
- Knowing how to adapt your language depending on the situation and the people involved

It is an evolving process and most children learn as they go along. However for some children the process breaks down and as a result they often carry the risk of their intentions being misunderstood and of social exclusion.

They may need support and guidance from the adults around them on how to use their language correctly in different situations and with different people.



# Following the Rules of Interaction

## What you can do to help

- Let people know that your child sometimes finds it tricky using language appropriately. Explain that he is not being naughty or rude.
- Make all conversations as meaningful as you can. If you do not know what your child means ask them to tell you again or show you.
- Keep your child on topic. If he tries to change the conversation to something else, tell him you will talk about what he wants to say soon.
- If your child says or does something inappropriate, tell him quietly what he has done and why he should not do it. This requires patience and understanding, as what is learnt in one situation may not be transferred to other similar situations.
- When talking to your child, ensure that you have their full attention. Encourage eye contact and if necessary gently tilt the child's head towards you to make it easier.
- Always give clear instructions which cannot be misinterpreted, e.g. "Go and get your bag please." Do not say, "Would you like to go and get your bag please?" This may well be answered with a resounding, "NO!"
- Avoid using phrases such as "Hang on a minute." or "I'll only be two ticks." as these only cause confusion for the child as they find it difficult to understand what they mean.



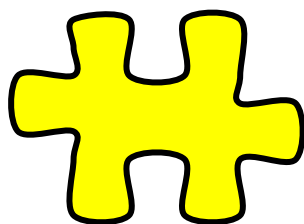
# Attention and Listening

If the child's listening and attention skills are really poor this may have an impact on other areas of development such as their communication and ability to retain/learn new information.

Some strategies to try are:

- Consider reducing the level of background noise – chat to parents about switching off the TV at home if no one is really watching it. (See Appendix Screen Time)
- Use short, simple sentences
- Be clear and concise
- Speak clearly and pause between key phrases
- Slow your rate of speech if necessary
- Use visual supports when giving information
- Consider visual cue cards or a visual timetable
- Remind the child what good listening skills are and praise them when they use them
- Make sure you have the child's attention before telling them something, for example, say the child's name before giving an instruction
- Play specific games to encourage attention and listening skills, for example, action songs and rhymes, small group games, turn taking games, sound games (animal, transport, home, musical instruments), feely bag games





## Supporting listening skills in an early years education setting

**Teaching Children to Listen- 2<sup>nd</sup> edition**  
**Liz Spooner and Jacqui Woodcock.**  
**Published 2013**

**ISBN – 9781408193617 Bloomsbury**

“Increasing numbers of children find it a challenge to stay focused on a task and follow even simple instructions in the classroom. This poor listening affects children’s learning in all curriculum areas- and their resultant distractive behaviour can make it more difficult for the rest of the class to keep listening.

Teaching children to listen outlines a whole-school approach to improving listening skills. This practical guide begins by looking at why listening skills are important and how to overcome the barriers to achieving them, before pinpointing the behaviours that children need to learn in order to be a good listener.

The book includes:

- The listening skills rating scale - a quick, photocopiable assessment method to rate children on each of the four rules of good listening.
- Advice on using these findings to inform individual education plans that focus on a specific area of difficulty.
- Activities to develop each of the key listening skills, including games to target whole-class listening and exercises particularly suitable for the Early Years.”



# Play

Play is the way the child learns about the world around him. Children need to have a variety of experiences to help them acquire language for thinking, sequencing, reasoning, problem solving, learning and communicating.

Pretend-play is particularly important. The symbolic nature of play is linked to the development of symbolic thinking which is essential for language development. Many children with language difficulties have problems with pretend-play. Children re-create what they experience through their play e.g. making a cup of tea; they learn a toy cup stands for/represents a real cup. Eventually a child will understand that a photograph / picture / spoken word / written word can all represent a cup.

The transition from self related play i.e. using objects on themselves or others, to doll related play may relate to the transition from single word utterances to phrases and sentences.

Observing children's play can give us important information about their level of development.

- Is the child using symbolic play? E.g. Does s/he have tea parties? Does s/he feed the baby?
- Does s/he play alongside other children?
- Does s/he play interactively with other children?
- Does s/he initiate play with other children?
- Does the child's play appear original and imaginative or is it repetitive or copied from others?

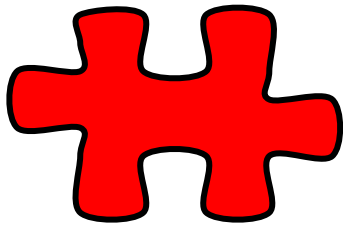
Children's play may progress through:

**Sensory based objects** such as, soft, tactile, basic activities, bubbles, blankets, play-dough, sand, water etc.

**Cause and effect** rolling a ball, bursting bubbles, ready steady go, pop up toys, wind-up toys.

**Symbolic play** using everyday objects (brush, cup, sponge, etc.). Children may use objects on themselves then on others before progressing on to using the objects with teddies or dolls. They may then move on to small world toys such as a doll's house, farm etc.

By age 4 to 5 years, pretend/symbolic play has typically developed into **socio-dramatic play**, which moves imaginative sequences into a social context. This may be more of a challenge for children who are showing some developmental delay so group learning opportunities are important for developing the foundations for these skills.



## People Play

Sometimes it can be difficult to play with your child because he is playing with a toy that is more interesting to him than you are. Try People Games instead:

- Rough and tumble games
- Tickling games
- Hiding/peek-a-boo games
- Chasing games
- Singing/nursery rhymes

In people games your child can learn:

- To take turns
- To pay attention while it's someone else's turn
- How to start and end a game
- To copy new actions and words
- That interacting with people is just as fun as playing alone!

**In people games, the focus is on the two of you, not the toy!**

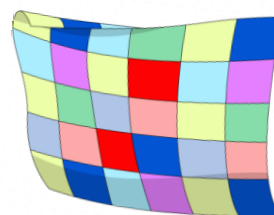
- You can also play people games with PEOPLE TOYS! Good people toys are ANYTHING THAT NEEDS **YOU** TOO



**HATS**



**BUBBLES**



**BLANKETS**



**BALLS**



**BALLOONS**



**WIND-UP TOYS**



**BOOKS**



# Understanding

Understanding is often over-estimated by parents/carers. This is because a child can follow instructions using non-verbal understanding, e.g. facial expression, tone of voice, gestures, following cues from the situation or routine, or copying others. But they might not be able to understand verbal instructions/cues.

Children need to understand a word before they can say it with true meaning.

Most children when they are learning to communicate can understand a lot more than they are able to say or show expressively.

Most of the time, we tend to pitch our language at the level we think they are understanding.

It is often best, however, to reduce the amount of language you are saying even more. Try to match your communication to your child's expressive communication level or just a little above.

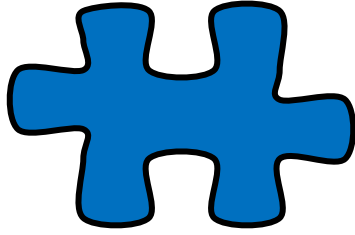
e.g. if they are using gestures and a few single words, then you use lots of gesture, single words and maybe the odd two word phrase. Also, remember to repeat their single words a few times over.

## Why is this important?

Although children, when they are learning language, can often understand more than they can say, they

- are more likely to stay and play with people who act and communicate like them.
- are likely to communicate more if we say less.
- find it easier to learn and copy new words if they hear them on their own.
- find it easier to copy new words if they hear them a few times over.

Here are some strategies to try...

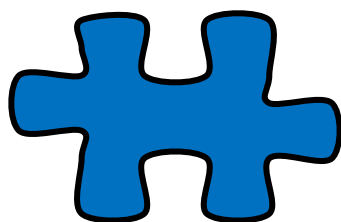


## Reduce your Language

Reducing your language means using only key/important words and phrases to help the child understand and to develop words and sentences.

For example, *'It's time for circle time, we're going to get into our different groups and have a story but go and wash up your plate first'* could be simplified in to small chunks of language e.g. *"Wash your plate."*, *"Group time."* This is much easier to understand!

- Some children have difficulty remembering and understanding a long sentence. If you reduce your language they are more likely to understand what has been said.
- If you think that the child has difficulty understanding, try to keep your language in the 'here and now' and try not to talk too much about past or future events unless they have just happened or are just about to happen.
- Be clear and consistent with what you want the child to do. If you feel that the child has not understood then re-word what you have said. Use gestures, pictures or the real objects to reinforce the main ideas.
- Reducing your language does not hold children back. The more that the child can begin to understand from the basic key words, routines, etc, the more their confidence will improve and the more language they will then be able to understand and cope with.
- If you reduce your language the child may be more likely to repeat single words or short simple phrases that s/he has heard.
- It can be helpful to repeat what you have said once in exactly the same way rather than re-phrasing immediately.



## Use Symbols and Gesture

We all use symbols and gestures in our everyday life – consider road signs, logos for getting our message across in a busy environment. These are a natural form of communication.

Symbols and gestures can support and help develop children's communication skills as they help our spoken language be more tangible.

These communication supports also provide children with communication difficulties, extra methods to use to get their message across.

- They provide structure and predictability – knowing what is happening allows him/her to focus on the activity without worrying about what's next
- They are consistent – events are logical and can be seen
- A child may be motivated by what is coming next – e.g. they might finish snack more quickly if outside play is next.
- Develops independence - the child can see what's next in a sequence instead of waiting for a prompt.
- Can introduce choice which can help support an inflexible child.

### **Most importantly visual strategies can reduce stress**

Points to consider:

- Does the nursery use symbols (Boardmaker®) or photos to represent activities, cupboard contents, places, etc?
- Observe the child when you add symbols and/or natural gesture e.g. putting hand to ear for 'listening' or hand up for 'stop'?
- Is the child using his/her own gestures to communicate? Do they copy your gestures?
- Is the child more able to make a choice when s/he is given a visual choice rather than just an auditory one e.g. showing an object or picture of snack choices rather than just verbally asking?
- Is it difficult to move a child on from an activity by using only a verbal request? Check the effect of a symbol/gesture to show 'finished' and 'what's next'
- Does the child watch and follow what the other children are doing rather than acting on a verbal request immediately?



# Signing - Why?

Children with communication difficulties may easily become passive unless we change things to enable them to be active communicators. One of the best ways to help is by creating a signing environment.

## ***“It’ll stop the person speaking”***

This is not true. Research suggests that encouraging a child to use sign can actually increase vocalization. **We always speak as we sign.** We're not giving up on talking, just providing an extra channel of communication

## ***“We can understand each other already”***

Introducing another way of getting a message across means that the child is less dependent on a small number of people to interpret for them. If a child is making themselves more effectively understood by combining their speech with sign, there are more opportunities for communication with other people and the child becomes more independent.

## ***“He’s not deaf”***

He may not be deaf but he may have difficulty understanding all that is said. Signing helps you to make your message clear and gives a child twice the chance to follow what is being said. If a child's speech is not clear, seeing their sign or gesture help us to understand them.

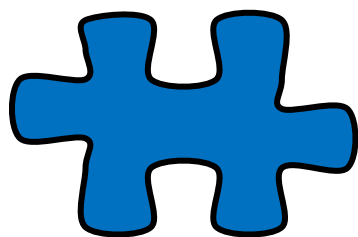
In Fife we use **Signalong** which is

- Designed to help people with communication difficulties
- Part of a total communication approach
- A sign supporting system
- Signed in English word order
- Key word approach at level of child's understanding
- Vocabulary led by child's needs

The Signalong Group is a charity which has developed and published a wide range of signs and associated resources to meet the needs of service users across the UK.

[www.signalong.org](http://www.signalong.org)

© The Signalong Group 2018

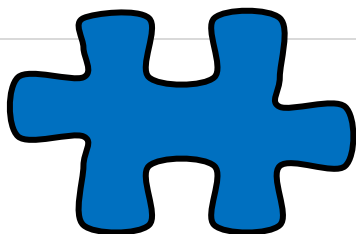


## Signalong

### Signs commonly used in nursery

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Social</u></b></p> <p>Hello</p> <p>Bye</p> <p>Good morning</p> <p>Good afternoon</p> <p>More</p> <p>No</p> <p>Good job</p> <p>Help</p> <p>Please</p> <p>Thank you</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Activities</u></b></p> <p>Time for...</p> <p>Home</p> <p>Shoes on/off</p> <p>Snack</p> <p>Computer</p> <p>Bus/car</p> <p>Singing</p> <p>Sand</p> <p>Story</p> <p>Toilet</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Positive Behaviour</u></b></p> <p>Share</p> <p>Take turns</p> <p>Ask for help</p> <p>Quiet voices</p> <p>Walk</p> <p>Be kind</p> <p>Tidy up</p> <p>Stop</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Actions</u></b></p> <p>Finish</p> <p>Play</p> <p>Sing</p> <p>Read</p> <p>Eat</p> <p>Wait</p> <p>Look</p> <p>Paint</p>





# Signalong Golden Rules

<p><b>Always speak as you sign</b></p>	<p><b>Using signing at all times and in all environments</b></p>
<p><b>Remember that signing helps understanding.</b></p>	<p><b>Use facial expression for emphasis.</b></p>
<p><b>Encourage social signing</b></p>	<p><b>Choose signs carefully - begin with just 5.</b></p>
<p><b>Be consistent with hand shapes</b></p>	<p><b>Praise very highly when you see signing being used</b></p>

© The Signalong Group 2018

The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC.  
All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission



# Talking

## What is a Late Talker?

A late talker is a child who is not using as many words as other children their age.

When children are late talkers, parents can fall into the trap of:

- Talking too much (to fill in the gaps)
- Missing their child's attempts to communicate (because they are subtle)
- Asking too many questions (to try and encourage child to speak)
- Not interacting enough (because it's hard for our children)



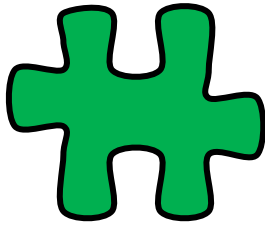
Parents and carers are essential to their child's development.



Research shows that parents can really help their child's progress by using some simple everyday strategies.



Parents tell us they want help to try strategies at home rather than visiting a clinic.



## Talking Tips

Get down to your child's level

Join their play and talk about what is happening

Pause ... to allow time for your child to take their turn

Avoid too many questions

Make instructions clear and simple

Add new words to help your child's language grow

Keep it short and simple

Actions and repetition really help

Sing nursery rhymes

Reading in a quiet spot helps children learn new words

TV, Radio and phones ringing make it harder to listen

Keep dummies for sleep times





# Vocabulary

Some of the research –

“Vocabulary knowledge is central to children's and adults' success in school and life.”  
(Stahl and Nagy 2005)

“A lack of vocabulary is a key component underlying failure for many students especially those who are economically disadvantaged”. (Block and Mangieri, 2006)

“In P1, children from higher socio economic groups knew about twice as many words as children from lower socio economic groups. “ (Graves, Brunetti and Slater, 1982)

At age 17-18, young people with poor vocabulary knowledge know about as many words as high achieving 8-9 year olds. (Smith, 1941)

Pupils add around 2,000-3,500 words to their reading vocabularies each year... (Approx 5-9 words every day)...if they are reading between half a million and a million words of running text. (Nagy & Anderson, 1984)

At 5 years old	The top 25%	The bottom 25%
come into school knowing	<b>7100 words</b>	<b>3000 words</b>
each day learn	<b>3 new words</b>	<b>1 new word</b>

Biemiller in Baumann and Kame'enui (2004)

## What is a WOW word?

**Tier 1**- everyday words

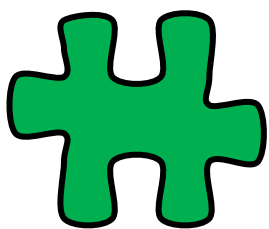
- basic words e.g. friend, arm, happy, baby, etc

**Tier 2 – ‘Wow’ words**

- **high frequency for mature language users e.g.**
- **chosen because they are useful and have ‘mileage’.**  
**e.g. glance, avoid, consider, discover, limited.**

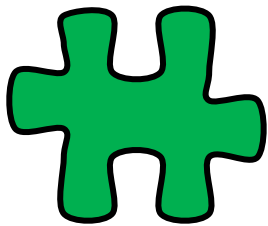
**Tier 3** – more advanced

- low frequency words
- incidence is often limited to specific domains  
e.g. amoeba, xylophone, astronaut, centipede.



## First 100 words

Nouns			Verbs	U	Adjectives	
Eyes		Bird	Brush		Big	
Feet		Cat	Clap		Dirty	
Hair		Dog	Cook		Hot	
Hands		Flower	Cry		Wet	
Mouth		Tree	Cut			
Nose			Drink		Up	
Toes		Apple	Dry		In	
Tummy		Biscuit	Eat		On	
		Dinner	Hit			
Bag		Plate	Jump		Done	
Coat		Spoon	Kick		More	
Dress			Push		Gone	
Hat		Brush	Read			
Pants		Soap	Run			
Shoes		Tap	Sit		<b>Social</b>	
Socks		Toilet	Sleep		No	
Trousers		Towel	Stand		Yes	
			Throw		Hi	
Ball		Bed	Walk		Bye	
Bike		Chair	Wash		Please	
Bricks		House			Thanks	
Bus		Table	Come			
Car			Find			
Doll		Cup	Get			
Duck		Drink	Give		<b>Sounds</b>	
Pram		Milk	Like/love		Moo	
Swing		Juice	Look (at)		Baa	
Teddy		Water	Make		Quack	
Book			Play		Miaow	
Box		<b>People</b>	Put		Woof	
Paper		Daddy	Want		Vroom	
Pencil		Mummy			Kiss	
		Baby				
		Gran				



## Make More Comments, Ask Fewer Questions

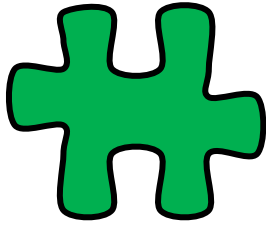
### Comments

- Watch and then comment on what the child does. When you put their ideas into simple words they hear a clear language model to encourage their language learning.
- Comments are an easy and effective way to show that you are paying attention to what they are interested in. There is no pressure for the child to verbally respond, only positive opportunities for them to listen and learn.
- Add in more ideas in words, gestures, actions or noises to the child's language attempts. For example, the child says 'ball'. The adult expands on the child's attempt, e.g. 'big ball', 'blue ball', 'kick the ball', 'mum's ball'. This gives the child opportunity to hear a slightly longer language phrase, as well as understanding different types of words e.g. actions and describing words.
- Adding language to their utterances is an extremely useful strategy at any stage of early language development. Expanding on children's key words and phrases may encourage them to make their sentence one word or idea longer. This again gives them the opportunity to gain stronger word knowledge, e.g.

'Look the plane is flying over your head. Let's fly it over the ....'

'Let's fly it up/down.'

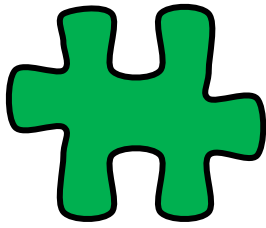
'The doll is jumping on the chair/table.' etc.



## Make More Comments, Ask Fewer Questions

### Questions

- Offering choices is a great way to encourage the child to join in and communicate with you. For example, saying *'is it a sheep or a dog?'* cuts down the possibilities but still allows the child to respond correctly. Saying *'Do you want water or juice?'* allows the child to use a word to make a successful choice.
- Lots of repetition of single words supports the child's vocabulary development rather than asking "What's that?" The child can repeat one word back, which leads to a positive communication experience. This improves the child's motivation to respond.
- Questions can be more difficult because they can place increased and specific language demands on the child. Understanding of different types of question develops in stages, so for younger children they may not have reached that level of development yet.
- Asking direct questions such as, *'What's that?'*, *'When did you go there?'*, *'Who was in the story?'* puts pressure on children. They have to understand the question then find the right combination of words to respond.
- Rewording questions (e.g. *"Show me the...."*, *"Let's have a look at the ....."*, *"I wonder....."*) means that the child can still respond verbally but can also use pointing, facial expressions, etc. Giving choices or making comments may also be appropriate, e.g. *"Did we go to the shops or the park?"* will enable the child to offer a response. A comment like *"Let's roll the ball!"* will enable them to join in with a word.



## Use Routines and Nursery Rhymes

### Daily Routines

Children learn through repetition so daily routines provide a great resource of language-rich opportunities. The more the child hears words as part of a routine s/he is experiencing, the more likely s/he is to learn both the sequence of activities and the words that accompany them.

Daily activities create good opportunities to increase your child's language. This allows your child to become familiar with new vocabulary.

Commenting on the displays and activities centred on nursery themes are also ideal for concentrated language experiences. The more the child becomes familiar with the activities and themes the more s/he will feel confident about joining in.



### Top Tip!

Enjoy creating a personalised scrapbook or a box to collect pictures with your child. This will help develop their vocabulary. Here are some suggested categories:-

Family/Friends

Pets

Clothes

Hobbies/Toys

Favourite TV characters

Household things – choose a room and paste in all the objects you might find in it.

### Nursery Rhymes and Books

Nursery rhymes and books follow a recognised script that can help a child anticipate what's coming and join in. Try leaving off the last word in the line or repeated phrase and then pause long enough to give them a chance to say a word.





# Speech Sounds

There is a generally recognised pattern for children to develop their speech sounds – we expect to see certain sounds at certain ages. However, as with all areas of development, the range of 'typical development' is quite wide! Some children develop their speech sounds early and some much later.

Speech sound difficulties can have a significant impact on how other people can understand the child's speech, and this may or may not affect the child's confidence or motivation to communicate.

Please refer to the speech sound checklist contained within the 'information on typical development' (page 5).

## What helps?

There are many positive things you can do to help the child to develop his/her confidence so that s/he will want to talk, can hear how new sounds are said and can practise them him/herself.

The main things the child needs to do are:

- Listen to how the sounds are used correctly in words.
- Hear these sounds again and again.

Try to:

- Make it fun, not hard work
- Praise him/her for the things s/he does well, rather than correcting.
- Repeat back the words – but provide a good model e.g.

Child: 'It's a tar'

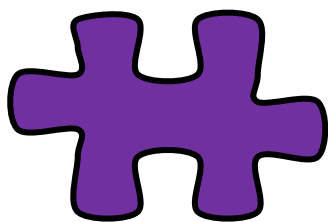
Adult: 'Yes, it's a car'

Child: 'Look at the dun'

Adult: 'Yes, the sun is in the sky'

## Why correcting the child does not help

- For many children it is not helpful to try to make them say the word again or to make them try to correct mistakes. Children might stop trying to talk, become frustrated, avoid saying words that contain a particular sound or become hesitant in their talking. Their stage of development may mean that they are not quite able to say the word correctly yet.
- Try to imagine how you might feel if you tried to learn a foreign language and someone stopped you every time you said a new word, told you that it was wrong and made you repeat it again and again. Most people would soon give up and feel upset!



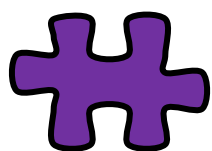
## Refer to Speech Sound Checklist

Note down how the child says the variety of words listed below which contain the speech sounds expected for a pre-school child.

Use the pictures overleaf or real objects to encourage the child to say the various words. This sample should be gathered over a period of a week with each word recorded at least twice at different times. Also note down any additional or significant difficulties preferably with specific examples of pronunciations.

Word	First attempt	Second attempt
paint		
teddy		
dog		
cup		
house		
knife		
book		
fish		
sand		
car		
snack		

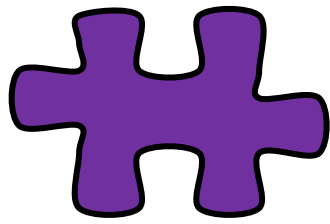
Check if the tricky sounds are developmentally appropriate and if so, begin to use modelling and recasting (see Page 36)



# Pictures for Speech Sample



The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC.  
All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission



## Use Modelling and Recasting

**Modelling** – Repeating a word back to a child in the correct way

Child: "That's a *bid* bird."

Adult: "It is. It is a **big** bird."



**The child has only heard the correct production once**

**Recasting** – A type of modelling where a word is repeated so that the child hears the correct production **several** times

Child: "I like his *punny* pace."

Adult: "I like his **funny** face too. It's a really **funny** face. Do you know what that guy with the **funny** face is called?"



**The child has heard the correct production several times.**

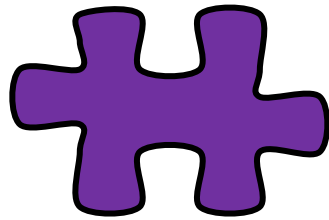
Here's another example



Child: "Where's my Batmobile tar?"

Adult: "Your Batmobile car? (1) Let me have a look for that car (2). Here are all your cars (3). Your cars (4) are all in this basket. Is it this car? (5) No that's not the Batmobile car (6) ! No, it's not this car (7), not this car (8), not this car (9) and not this car (10) either! Ah, here's your Batmobile car (11). Let's play with the cars (12) now. Who's going to drive the Batmobile car (13)?"

Aim for 12 –18 recasts a minute. This is for the same word and aim to recast another 3-4 times that day



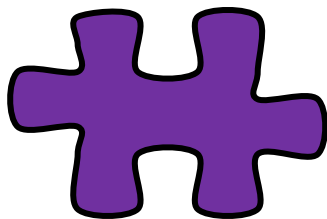
## Syllable Clapping

Syllable clapping is tapping/clapping out the rhythm of a word. It will help your child to pay attention to all the parts of it and helps them to pronounce those longer multi syllabic words like com – pu – ter.

- Ball → 1 clap
- Ro cket → 2 claps
- E le phant → 3 claps

It also helps listening skills and helps the child to organise words and become more aware of the different parts of the word. It's one of the skills necessary for developing literacy later on.

1 beat words are usually the trickiest– if you are unsure → put your hand under your chin to identify syllables as you say the word.



## Listening for sounds in words

**Listening to Sounds** - Draw attention to sounds at the beginning (or end) of words and emphasise these.

e.g. “Look at that red fish... Oh, fish starts with ‘f’...Let’s think of some more words that start with ‘f’: **f**oot, **f**our, **p**hone, **f**ire”

- Collect things around the nursery that begin with sound
- Look through a book and point out words with the sound
- Make a sound picture
- Point out things in the environment – notice sounds/words in signs.



# Appendices

1. Stammering and the Under 5s	39
2. Frequently Asked Questions on Bilingual Children	41
3. Top 10 Tips	43
4. Screen Time	49
5. Dummies and speech	50
6. Communication High 5	51
7. Useful websites and links	52
8. Details of your local Speech and Language Therapy Cluster	53



# Stammering

'Stammer', 'stutter' and 'dysfluency' are all terms used to describe the same thing!

## Why does my child stammer?

- Many children are not fluent when they learn to talk
- About one in 20 children between the ages 2—4 years are not fluent – often when their language level increases they may go through a period of their tongue not keeping up with what they want to say! This can lead to e.g. some repetitions of the first word in their sentence. "I I I I I saw a rabbit in the field!"
- Most children grow out of this phase and become fluent speakers.
- The underlying cause of stammering is unknown.
- Parents do NOT cause stammering
- Around 20% of dysfluent children do not spontaneously overcome their difficulties and may need to see a speech and language therapist

You can refer to the British Stammering Association website to access advice / resources at <https://stamma.org/information-leaflets>

Here are some ideas on managing dysfluency...



# General Advice for parents/staff on managing dysfluency

## **Try to resist seeing your child's speaking pattern as a problem**

- Parents do not cause stammering but if you are anxious this can be passed on to the child

## **Show your child you are interested in what they say not how they say it**

- Maintain natural eye contact when your child is having difficulty talking
- Listen carefully to your child
- Concentrate on what he/she is saying not how they are saying it
- Don't look away when your child stammers

## **Be Supportive**

- If appropriate, acknowledge the difficulty in a matter-of-fact way so your child does not feel criticised
- Avoid labeling the difficulty as stammering, use expressions like 'bumpy speech' or 'getting stuck'

## **Slow down your own rate of speech**

- Children try to match their parents rate of speech
- The faster a person who stammers tries to speak the more likely they are to stammer

## **Arrange a regular time when your child has your undivided attention**

- Give your child your full attention in a calm relaxed atmosphere for around 5 minutes
- It's easier to talk about things you are doing now not things in things past or planned for the future

## **Reduce the number of questions you ask**

- Give your child time to answer one question before asking another, this reduces the pressure your child feels
- Keep sentences short and simple
- Instead of questions try just commenting on what your child has said to let him/her know you are listening

## **Take turns to talk so everyone in the family can speak without being interrupted**

- This will reduce the amount that your child is interrupted or that they interrupt others

## **Try to avoid being hectic or rushed during conversation**

- Stammering can increase when your child is tired
- Children who stammer respond well to a routine and structured environment
- It is helpful to establish regular sleep patterns and a regular healthy diet

## **Avoid putting pressure on your child to speak**

- e.g. "Tell Granny what you did today"
- Speaking on the phone can be difficult

## **Be encouraging if your child gets upset about their speech**

- React as you would with anything else that that might upset them.





*Talk To Your Baby*

## **Bilingualism: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Is it an advantage to speak more than one language?**

Yes. Bilingualism helps children's learning because they can think about their ideas in both languages. They can communicate with more people in their community and internationally and understand different cultures. They stay connected to their family, so they feel secure in their identity and have more self-confidence. This helps them do well at school. They can learn other languages more easily and have more job opportunities in the future.

### **Is it true that all bilingual children start to speak later than monolingual children?**

There is no evidence that bilingual children learn to speak later. Some children, whether bilingual or monolingual, learn to speak later than others.

### **Should parents speak their mother tongue at home?**

Yes. If children know their first language well, it will help them learn English. When they understand an idea in their first language (such as numbers or colours), they easily pick up the English word that means the same thing. They also know how to use grammar and vocabulary in their first language, so they can quickly work out what is similar or different about the English language.

### **Isn't it better for parents to speak English instead?**

No. It's very important that parents use the language they know best and feel most comfortable in. This is how they can help children develop language, talk about ideas and learn about the world. A child benefits from learning a language from their parents if the parents are confident in that language. A child who develops good use of mother tongue is more likely to develop good English. But if parents use English instead, children will lose their mother tongue. Neither language will progress and the child can have problems in both languages.

### **Parents often find their children refuse to speak their first language at home and insist on speaking English. What should they do about this?**

Children quickly find out that English is the most powerful language in our society and they often pick up the message that other languages are less valuable. Schools, children's centres and family learning tutors can help by emphasising the importance of mother tongue. Explain to parents that they need to keep speaking their first language, even if their child answers in English. Children will understand what has been said and continue learning the language. Parents can also tell stories and sing songs with their children, borrow books in their language from the library, and watch TV programmes or videos and talk about them together. They can take their children to community language classes and social events so they meet others who

These questions can be downloaded and photocopied for free. For more information visit [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk). Talk To Your Baby is an initiative of the National Literacy Trust.

speak their language. Visiting family back home gives children a strong motivation to communicate with cousins and grandparents. Although it may be hard work to keep up the first language, children will thank their parents when they are older and they understand the advantages of being bilingual.

**Some parents say they are not teaching their child their family's language, because they want them to learn English first.**

Many parents say this. It is important to remember that the younger a child is the easier it is to learn a language. Also many children feel left out in their families when everyone around them is speaking a language they cannot understand. Children in this situation also miss out on all the advantages of bilingualism and can develop serious identity problems as they grow up.

**Some children tell their parents not to speak their language to them in the school playground or in public.**

Children who are not encouraged from very young to feel very proud of their language and culture can feel like this. Also children who are teased at school may feel embarrassed. The school should be encouraged to see bilingualism as an extra skill which the child has. He should be praised publicly for using it. Some children respond very well to being told of the advantages of being bilingual. Attending classes at a community language school can also help children to feel much more positive about their bilingualism.

**What about children who have speech problems and are seeing a speech therapist? Should the parents stop speaking their first language at home and speak only English (even if their English is not very good)?**

There is no evidence that bilingualism will make it harder for children with speech problems to develop speech. If the family stops speaking their language to a child who already has a speech problem there is a possibility that the child will become even more isolated and unable to speak. If communication in the family is difficult in English, this can only add to the problems. A child with a speech problem needs to be surrounded by people who feel confident in their use of language so that he has positive role models. Some researchers in this field even think that bilingualism can be very positive for these children.

**If a child is growing up with two languages (for example, Cantonese and English) and she sometimes uses English words when speaking Cantonese or vice versa, is she confused?**

Children will use words that they know rather than not say anything at all. For instance, if a child knows the word for 'ice cream' in one language and not the other she will use the word in the language she knows rather than not ask for ice cream at all. The child is not confused; she is simply making use of all the language she has.

Charmian Kenner, Lecturer, Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London

Taken from *Bilingual Children: a guide for parents and carers*, written by Foufou Savitzky, London Language and Literacy Unit, South Bank University, 1994. Copies of this booklet are available from Avanti Books, phone 01 438 3500155, email [avantiord@aol.com](mailto:avantiord@aol.com)

and *Share Our Languages* family learning report. [www.ourlanguages.org.uk](http://www.ourlanguages.org.uk)

These questions can be downloaded and photocopied for free. For more information visit [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk). Talk To Your Baby is an initiative of the National Literacy Trust.



# Top Tips

You can email your local Speech & Language  
Therapist to request an electronic copy of these  
resources

or





Find them on our facebook and twitter–  
NHS Fife Speech and Language Therapy

@banter4bairns



## Communication Skills at Two Years of Age







What to expect around 2 years of age	Consider a referral if the child....
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☺ uses a varied vocabulary including everyday objects, basic verbs, symbolic noises, social language</li> <li>☺ beginning to put two words together (e.g. "Tractor gone")</li> <li>☺ asking "What's that?" and "Where is...?"</li> <li>☺ recites portion of nursery rhymes</li> <li>☺ spontaneously repeating words after an adult</li> </ul> <p> <b>By age 2:06, a 'vocabulary explosion' has often occurred, with children using up to 300 words expressively.</b></p>	<p> ! is not attempting to speak</p> <p>! is making slow progress with vocabulary acquisition</p> <p>! is more reliant on non-verbal methods of communication than words</p> <p>! is using first words which are unusual or not highly functional for the child, such as 'telephone directory'</p> <p>! used words fairly consistently and now appears to have lost them</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Speech Sounds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☺ making a fair attempt at words</li> <li>☺ sounds expected are 'p', 'b', 't', 'd', 'm', 'n', and vowels</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>! uses no consonants or an <i>extremely</i> limited range</p> <p> <b>It is highly unlikely that speech sounds are the main cause of frustration in a child of 2 yrs. Clear speech is not the main priority for this age group.</b></p>



## Communication Skills at Two Years of Age



What to expect around 2 years of age	Consider a referral if the child....
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social Interaction and Play</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☺ watches person's face for clues</li> <li>☺ interacts with familiar people (e.g. simple social responses, 'bye bye', 'hello')</li> <li>☺ pretend play is developing (e.g. puts doll to bed, feeds teddy)</li> <li>☺ leads adult to what he / she wants</li> <li>☺ follows another child's actions</li> <li>☺ attends to own choice of activity</li> <li>☺ beginning to recognise pictures of familiar objects</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"></p>	<p>! consistently fails to respond to their name</p> <p>! avoids contact with other children or adults</p> <p>! has rigid patterns of behaviour</p> <p>! plays differently to other children of the same age</p> <p> <b>Consider referral to other relevant agencies e.g. paediatrician, psychologist, Pre-3 Pathway</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☺ carries out simple instructions (e.g. "Give the shoes to daddy".)</li> <li>☺ recognises the names of familiar people, objects, pets etc. (around 50 words understood)</li> <li>☺ knows what everyday objects are used for</li> <li>☺ understands basic action words (e.g. jump, sleep)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"></p>	<p>! has limited situational understanding—doesn't seem to know what is expected within known daily routines</p> <p>! is having obvious difficulties understanding instructions appropriate to their age group.</p> <p> <b>These difficulties cannot be solely attributed to "terrible twos".</b></p>





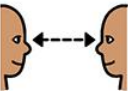





The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC.  
All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with permission



## Top Ten Tips to Develop Early Communication Skills

Remember

Ideas

<p><b>T</b>ake turns</p>	<p>Copy the child's babble/vocalisations. Take turns with toys and games (e.g. rolling a ball to and fro).</p> 
<p><b>O</b>ffer choices</p>	<p>Offer specific choices, such as "Would you like a puzzle or a book?" rather than asking, "What do you want?"</p> 
<p><b>p</b>ay attention to the non-verbal</p>	<p>Accept gesture, pointing and facial expressions as a response. Interpret what they've tried to tell you, even if it's not clear.</p> 
<p><b>T</b>hink about language levels</p>	<p>Use simple or reduced language – this is ok for younger children. Build on the number of words they are using. If the child says "car" you can say "yes big car".</p> 
<p><b>e</b>nvironment <small>What is your position?</small></p>	<p>Switch the telly off! Be at their level (e.g. sit with them on the floor). Everyday objects are as good as expensive toys.</p> 
<p><b>n</b>ow follow your child's lead</p>	<p>Go with the child's interest and choice of toys. Children like repetition, so use the same book or toy.</p> 
<p><b>T</b>hink about different words</p>	<p>Remember to label action words (e.g. jumping) as well as objects (e.g. teddy). Talk to your child about what you are doing as you do it (e.g. shopping and washing).</p> 
<p><b>i</b>ntroduce songs and rhymes</p>	<p>Leave out the last part of a Nursery Rhyme – can the child add the last part? Children love fun action games like peek a boo or round the garden.</p> 
<p><b>p</b>romote opportunities</p>	<p>Don't anticipate what the child wants – look expectantly and wait. Use more comments that questions.</p> 
<p><b>S</b>tart having fun</p>	<p>Short bursts. See what works. Give lots of praise!</p>  <p>Well done!</p>


The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981-2010 by MayerJohnson LLC.  
All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with Permission.





Speech & Language Therapy Service  
#banter4bairns

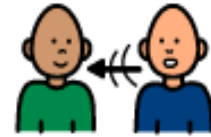
## Top Ten Tips for Language & Communication: Getting your child ready for school

<p><b>T</b>urn Taker</p>	<p>Good conversations involves equal turns. Use toys and table top games that encourage turn taking and develop attention and listening (e.g. lottos, puzzles or snap).</p> 
<p><b>O</b>ffer the correct example</p>	<p>Interpret what your child is saying, repeat back what it should be. Child – 'me want mato' You – 'Oh.... You want a tomato'. Child – 'him falled down stair' You – 'yes he fell down the stair'.</p> 
<p><b>P</b>rovide and build.....</p>	<p>Remember expand and develop what your child says: Child: 'wand car' You: ' you want your blue police car'. Child: 'sad lost ball' You: 'he is sad because he has lost his ball'.</p> 
<p><b>T</b>hink about language levels</p>	<p>Use simple or reduced language – this is ok for younger children. Gain full attention, emphasise key words. Chunk the instruction and ask them to repeat back.</p> 
<p><b>E</b>nvironment to learn language</p>	<p>Switch the telly off and make some special time. Encourage some of the skills that your child will need for school – good sitting, listening and looking.</p> 
<p><b>N</b>ow be follower and leader</p>	<p>It's good to follow your child's lead during play. But.....encourage your child to also follow the adult too.</p> 
<p><b>T</b>hink about different words</p>	<p>Develop your child's word bank. Label the action and describing words (e.g. action = skipping, texture = furry) and remember the position words in/on/under and in front/behind. Use the concepts same/different and first/next/last.</p> 
<p><b>I</b>ntroduce fun with sounds</p>	<p>Have fun with Nursery Rhymes and rhyming words. Clap out words into parts (e.g.ba/na/na). Play ' I spy', Find words that start or end with specific sounds. Read books together and point out some of the sounds.</p> 
<p><b>P</b>romote conversations</p>	<p>Create lots of talking opportunities. Talk together about your day and their time at nursery. Encourage them to tell you about an activity (e.g. making a sandwich) or how things happen. Get them to help you with a list (i.e. shopping or packing).</p>
<p><b>S</b>ee what works</p>	<p>Go with what works, build on and develop your child's skills. Have fun and give lots of praise.</p> 

The Picture Communication Symbols © 1981-2010 by Mayer Johnson LLC  
All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Used with Permission.



## SPEECH SOUND CHECKLIST



		90% of children
All common vowel sounds		3 years
[p]	<u>pan</u> , <u>sheep</u>	3 years
[b]	<u>ball</u> , <u>crab</u>	
[t]	<u>teddy</u> , <u>letter</u>	
[d]	<u>dog</u> , <u>bed</u>	
[m]	<u>mouse</u> , <u>mummy</u>	
[n]	<u>nose</u> , <u>banana</u>	
[w]	<u>wellies</u>	
[k]	<u>cat</u> , <u>key</u> , <u>rocket</u>	5 years
[g]	<u>go</u> , <u>dog</u>	
[f]	<u>feet</u> , <u>knife</u>	
[h]	<u>house</u>	
[y]	<u>yes</u>	
[s]	<u>soap</u> , <u>dress</u>	
[ng]	<u>king</u>	
[sh]	<u>shoe</u> , <u>fish</u>	6 years
[ch]	<u>chin</u> , <u>ketchup</u>	
[j]	<u>joke</u> , <u>bridge</u>	
[z]	<u>zoo</u> , <u>bees</u>	
[v]	<u>van</u> , <u>leaves</u>	
[l]	<u>lion</u> , <u>bell</u>	
[r]	<u>rain</u> , <u>bear</u>	7 years
[th]	<u>thin</u> , <u>bath</u>	
[th]	<u>feather</u>	
[ ]	<u>measure</u>	

Based on research by Ann Locke

These are the ages when 90% of children will use these sounds.



Talk To Your Baby – quick tips

# Making the most of television

Like adults, children sometimes feel tired or stressed and want to relax by watching television. Used in the right way, television can be beneficial. But too much can be harmful, so it's important to find the right balance.

- Try to limit your child's daily TV time to no more than half an hour for under-twos and an hour for three to five-year-olds. This will give you time for important activities like playing.
- Always turn off the TV when no one is watching because constant background noise can distract you and your children from playing, listening and talking to each other.
- Try to limit your child's viewing to programmes that have been designed for her age-group.
- Allow your child to watch the same video or DVD again and again. This can be better than television as the repetition and familiarity of words and phrases make it easier for children to learn from them.
- Don't put a television in your child's bedroom. This gives you less control over what and how much television he watches. If your child does have a TV in his room, make sure it is closely monitored.
- Try to watch TV or videos together so you can talk about what happens.



© Posy Simmonds

National  
Literacy  
Trust

*Talk To Your Baby*

Quick tips may be photocopied. For more information visit [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)  
Talk To Your Baby is an initiative of the National Literacy Trust.

## Talk To Your Baby – quick tips

# Dummies and talking

Babies like to suck, so dummies can help soothe at bedtime or when your baby is tired or cross. But regular and extended use of a dummy can create problems with your child's speech.

- Try to wean your child away from dummies, preferably by 12 months.
- Make a clean break – throw away the dummy over a weekend, or at a time when you have support. Most babies and toddlers will fret for no more than two or three days.
- Dummies prevent babies from babbling – an important step in learning to talk, so only use them at set times, like bedtime.
- When your baby cries he's trying to tell you something, so try to find out what's troubling him first, and use the dummy as a last resort.
- Never dip your baby's dummy into anything sweet. This can cause tooth decay.



© Illustrations by  
Patsy Simmonds

- Remember, learning to talk can be tricky so toddlers need lots of practice. A dummy will discourage your toddler from chatting with you, which she needs to do to develop her language skills.
- If your toddler is still using a dummy, always ask him to take it out before you talk to each other.



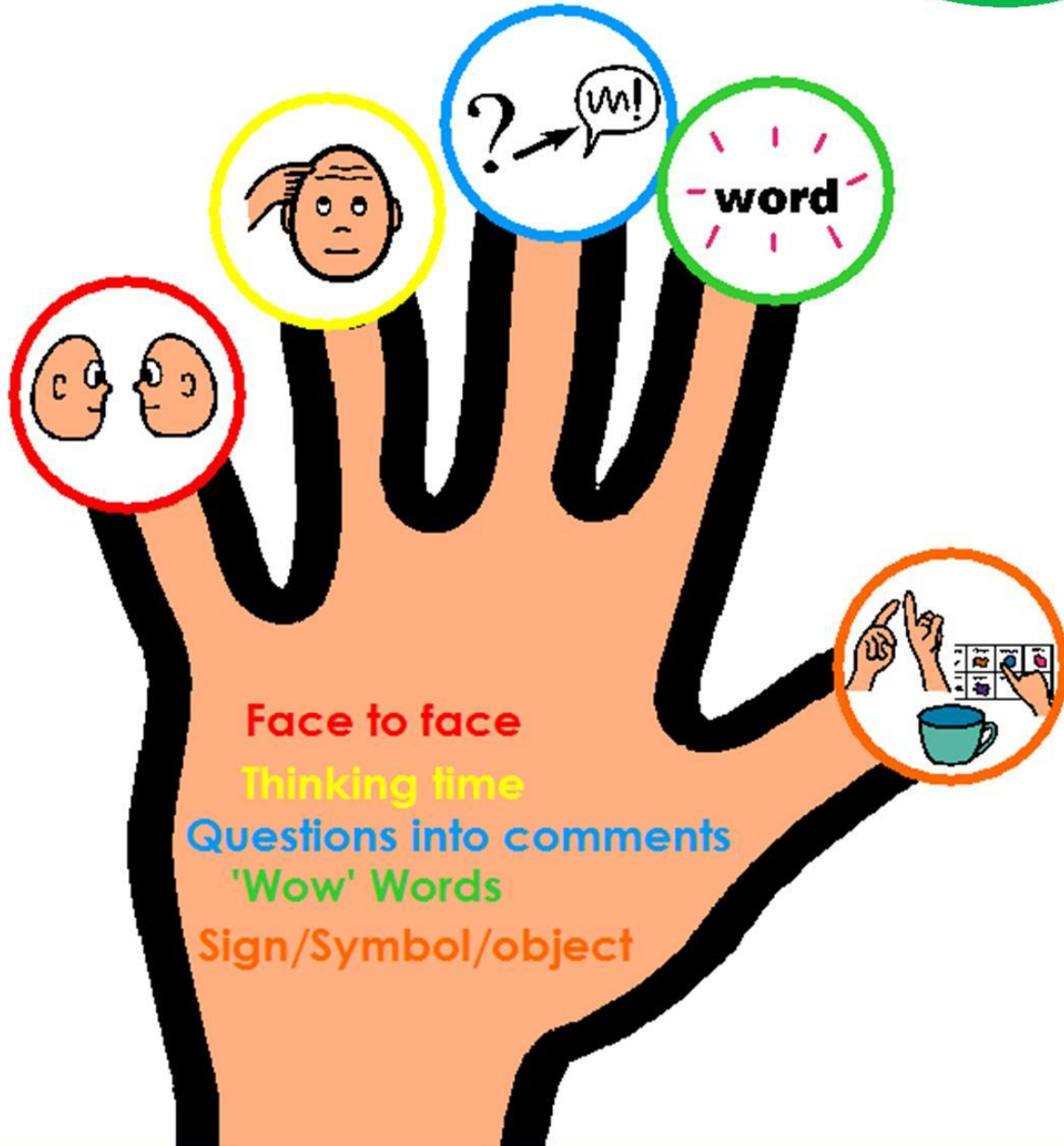
National  
Literacy  
Trust

*Talk To Your Baby*

Quick tips may be photocopied. For more information visit [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk)  
Talk To Your Baby is an initiative of the National Literacy Trust.



# Communication? **High 5!**



***Keep these 5 top tips at your fingertips to support great communication skills.***



Follow us on Facebook: **NHS Fife Speech and Language Therapy**  
#banter4bairns #toptip4tues #words4wed



Or search @banter4bairns on Twitter

The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981–2010 by Mayer-Johnson LLC. All Rights Reserved Worldwide.  
Used with permission



## Useful Websites and Links

Check out our social media pages for hints and tips and please share with others. **If you have a question or are looking for a quick piece of advice, you can send us a direct message on social media** and expect a reply within 24hours



Like and Follow us on Facebook: NHS Fife Speech & Language Therapy



Follow us on Twitter: @banter4bairns

Or search: [#banter4bairns](#)



Our **Advice Line, Tel: 01592 226699** is currently open on **Tuesday afternoons from 2-4pm and Thursday mornings from 10am -12 noon.** Check facebook and twitter for updated information.

We also have an **Education Enquiry Line** for all education staff - **01383 674055** (Mon 2pm-4pm and Thurs 2pm-4pm)

<http://slctoolforhv.nes.digital/>  
[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)  
[www.talktoyourbaby.org](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org)  
[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)  
[www.nottslanguageforlife.co.uk](http://www.nottslanguageforlife.co.uk)  
[www.wordsforlife.org](http://www.wordsforlife.org)  
[www.signalong.org.uk](http://www.signalong.org.uk)  
[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/early-years](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/early-years)

### Through the eyes of a child.

For the national year of communication, Hello, the Communication Trust produced 4 films to help parents encourage their children's communication development. Narrated by comedian Kathy Burke, the films are full of useful advice on how parents can encourage their child to talk and interact with them. <https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-parents/through-the-eyes-of-a-child.aspx>



# Parent Information Sessions

We currently run two sessions on a rolling programme throughout Fife. Details are published on Facebook and Twitter and sent to all Health Visitors and ELCCs. There is a chance at the end to chat individually to the speech and language therapist and ask any specific questions you have about your child's communication.

Unfortunately, we do not have crèche facilities so these sessions are for **adults only**. Two places are allocated so both parents are welcome to attend or you can bring your child's grandparent/childminder/key worker.

## Let's Talk

**This session is designed for those supporting children aged 0-3**

Lasting around an hour, these sessions give parents and carers an opportunity to learn more about

- The typical way children develop language
- Key strategies to use that help support their progress

## Let's be Clear

**This session is designed for those supporting children in Nursery and early Primary who are talking but whose speech sound system is still developing and changing.**

Lasting around an hour, these sessions give parents and carers an opportunity to learn more about

- The typical way children's speech sounds develop.
- What they might sound like as their speech sound system is changing.
- Key strategies to use that help support their progress.



# Contacts

## Central Office

Morag Muir  
SLT Admin Office  
Cameron House  
Windygates, KY8 5RR  
Tel: 01592 226784

## Interim Head of SLT Service

Hilary Munro  
Cameron House  
Cameron Hospital  
Windygates KY8 5RR  
Tel: 01592 226784  
Email: [hilary.munro@nhs.scot](mailto:hilary.munro@nhs.scot)

## CYP SLT Operational Lead for West Fife (Temporary)

Natalie Buchanan  
Carnegie Unit  
Queen Margaret Hospital  
Whitefield Road,  
DUNFERMLINE, KY12 0SU  
Tel: 01383 627914  
Email: [natalie.buchanan@nhs.scot](mailto:natalie.buchanan@nhs.scot)

## CYP SLT Interim Operational Lead for East Fife

Roma More  
Cameron House  
Cameron Hospital  
Windygates KY8 5RR  
Tel: 01592 226785  
Email: [roma.more@nhs.scot](mailto:roma.more@nhs.scot)