

What you can do at home to help develop your child's language

Attract your child's attention

Remember to check you have your child's attention before speaking to him/her so that what you say carries the greatest impact.

e.g. call his name/touch her arm, then pause until he/she looks at you.

Speak simply and slowly

A small child's understanding is very limited. Use short, simple sentences and don't forget to pause in order to give him/her time to absorb what you are saying.

Talk about here and now

A young child needs to express his/her needs and what he/she is doing now e.g. "want drink", "play car"

Comment on what your child is doing now rather than what he/she did yesterday/ last week e.g. "dolly's having a drink", "that's a big car"

Avoid too many questions,

Use opportunities for talking

Use everyday routines as a base for talking and repeating words e.g. bath times you can use "wash", "dirty", body parts etc.

Give your child opportunities to repeat words or phrases you have used, allow him/her time to talk.

Use any opportunity to talk with your child :

- Throughout your daily routines
- In play
- On special outings
- Through reading books
- By talking about pictures
- When watching children's TV together
- By answering questions etc.etc.

Listen and expand

Listen to what your child says, repeat the sentence adding 1 or 2 words.

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e.g. Child says “granny home”

Adult says “yes, granny going home” and emphasise “going”

Accept any attempts to talk

Listen to what your child says rather than how he/she says it.

It is normal for young children to mispronounce some sounds. Avoid correcting these errors as it may discourage him from talking. Instead, repeat the word after him/her clearly.

e.g. child says “it’s a tar”

adult says “yes it’s a car” emphasising the ‘c’ sound.

There is no need to ask the child to repeat the word once you have modelled the correct sound pattern. Your child will say the correct sounds when he/she is mature enough.

Relax and have fun

A child learns best when he/she is enjoying him/herself. Accept his/her attempts to talk, your child will respond much better to a smiling face rather than an anxious or critical one.