



Speech and Language Therapy Advice Sheet

Top 10 Talking Tips

For young children, the people who spend most time with them are the best people to help them learn to talk. Use these great tips every day and you will start to see a difference:

1. **Concentrate on your child when you are talking:** This is easier to do if you are at the same level, so get down to their eye level or bring them up to yours.
2. **Talk to your child in short, simple sentences:** This helps them to understand what you're saying and also gives them a better chance of copying a word or two when they're ready.
3. **Talk about the things your child is looking at or doing:** Follow their lead when playing with them and talk about what interests them. Children learn words by hearing the word at the same time as seeing the object and making the connection between the two.
4. **Repeat words often:** You may have to say words over and over again before your child learns to say a word.
5. **Model language for your child in play and in daily routines:** Like mealtimes and bath time. Making rhymes, singing and story times with favorite books are great opportunities for them to hear familiar words and to use them.
6. **Repeat back what you think your child means:** When they don't have the words. For example, if your child points at the biscuit tin and babbles, you could say 'Biscuit?'
7. **Use different kind of words:** Children need to know lots of different types of words before they are ready to start joining them together into simple phrases. Try to make sure your child is hearing a range of words when you play together
Naming words - Ball, cat, mummy **Action words** – eat, run, jump **Descriptive and position words** - hot, big, up, out, **Social words** – Bye, night night, more, No.

8. **Give your child choices:** Between two things to encourage communication. For example, instead of saying, 'What do you want to drink?', you could say, 'Do you want milk or juice?' holding both choices up in front of them
9. **Comment rather than question:** Instead of trying to 'get the child to talk' by asking questions, try commenting on what they are doing. For example, if they are building a tower of bricks – instead of saying 'what are you doing?' say 'You're building. Build a tower.' This is a more effective way of supporting language development. It takes away any pressure to speak and gives your child a model of the words they may wish to use.. **Remember: Asking questions – tests language Commenting – teaches language**
10. **Set up special play times:** Set aside 10 minutes every day for your 'Special Play Times'. Turn the TV/radio/tablet/phone off and just focus on playing with your child. Tell your child 'It's time for special play time' and put a range of toys out for your child to choose from. Sit on the floor with them and use the strategies mentioned above.

If you have tried using these strategies and you are still concerned about your child's talking you can either:

- Contact your Health Visitor for advice
- Contact your child's Early Years Setting, if they have one, for advice
- Contact your local Children's Centre for information on groups that may be running
- Look on our website for the 'Quick Reference Guide'. This is a guide on when may be the best time to refer your child to Speech and Language Therapy. The referral forms and further advice sheets are also available on the website:

<https://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/childrens-centre/your-childs-hospital-journey/therapy-services/childrens-therapy-referral/>

- You can access further information from the following websites:

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk>

Go to 'Resources - Resources for Parents' and look for the 'Through the eyes of a child' videos

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk>

<https://www.ican.org.uk>

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>