



Speech and Language Practical Activities Factsheet

Publication date: 2016

1. How to help develop your child's attention and listening skills

Developing your child's attention is very important for their communication development.

Strategies

- Remove any distractions and background noise
- Ensure that you and your child are sitting face to face
- Make sure you have eye contact with your child
- Gain their attention by using their name

Activities

- Sing songs and rhymes with actions, e.g. Wheels on the Bus, Heads and Shoulders
- Play Musical Bumps/Statues – play some music and stop at intervals. Encourage your child to sit on a chair or on the floor as quickly as possible when the music stops, and to run or dance when the music plays
- Go for a walk/Sit in a room and encourage your child to listen to the sounds they can hear, e.g. aeroplanes, dogs, cars

2. How to help develop your child's play skills

Developing your child's play skills is very important for their communication development.

Strategies

- Allow your child to take the lead, follow them in their play
- Comment on your child's play using short phrases and emphasise key words such as "teddy JUMPING"
- Give plenty of time for your child to talk, taking turns to speak

Activities

- Exploratory Play
 - Allow your child to explore objects such as wet/dry, hard/soft e.g. fill a tray with pasta and allow your child to feel the textures
 - Use cause and effect toys such as pop up toys, wind-up toys
- Messy play
 - Finger painting, potato printing, use, play dough, putty, shaving foam
- Pretend play

- Keep everyday objects, e.g. boxes, egg cartons and encourage your child to play with them. For example a box can be a car, a boat or a hat
- Have a tea party with a teddy or doll and feed them using pretend food
- Do everyday actions with dollies and teddies: put them to sleep, feed them, etc.

3. How to help develop your child's social interaction skills

Developing your child's social interaction is very important for their communication development.

Strategies

- Encourage your child to look at you
- Call his or her name, jangle keys, or by touch his/her face to help him or her look
- When your child does look at you, show how pleased you are

Activities

- Turn taking
 - Play games such as: building towers, taking turns to unload the shopping, rolling a ball
- Eye Contact
 - Play games such as: peek-a-boo, rolling a ball, ready steady go games, blowing bubbles

4. How to help develop your child's speech sound skills

Developing your child's speech sound skills is very important for their communication development.

Strategies

- If your child is very difficult to understand encourage him/her to show you what you mean, or gesture to you
- Avoid directly correcting your child's speech
- Speak clearly
- Encourage your child to look at you when you talk.
- Visual clues are also important in learning speech sounds. There are many ways to practice listening to speech sounds and saying sounds.
- Get your child's hearing checked

Activities

- Your Speech & Language Therapist may give you specific activities to carry out dependant on your child's speech difficulty

5. How to help develop your child's language skills

Developing your child's language is very important for their communication development

Strategies

- Speak to your child while you play
- Use gestures (Makaton)/visuals when speaking
- Give plenty of time for your child to talk, taking turns to speak
- Use choices as this will encourage your child to use the words e.g. "do you want milk or juice?"
- Create a need to talk, e.g. give you child a cup but with no drink in it, or a piece of paper to draw a picture but no pencils

Activities

- Daily activities.
 - Talk through everyday activities as they are happening, e.g. breakfast time, it's time to eat, cereal or toast, butter the bread
- Nursery rhymes.
 - Children like the repetition of simple nursery rhymes and it encourages copying/imitating e.g. 'Baa baa black sheep'
- Model noises that toys make e.g.:
 - Cars – beep beep
 - Cow – moo, moo
 - Train – choo choo
 - Dog – woof woof
- Bubbles
 - Playing with bubbles allows you repeat simple functional words such as "up", "pop", "gone", "more?"
 - When the bubbles have gone ask your child "more?"