



## ...giving children the best start

### Get Talking!

Speech, language, and communication are a vital part of your child's early development. The skills they learn now will help them throughout their lives - being able to hold conversations, communicate basic needs, feelings, thinking, problem solving, building relationships and so much more.



Chances are you might be supporting your child's language skills without even realising. Singing songs, reading, and telling stories that have rhythm and repetition can all help your child to learn and remember words.

If you speak more than one language at home, then talk with your child in the language that you feel most confident using.





## HIT THE PAUSE BUTTON



Children need time to process what is being asked of them.

It can sometimes take your child up to **10 seconds** to hear what you are saying, to process it, to let their brain put the words in order, and think about how to sound the words out to reply to you.

When you ask a question or make a comment while you are playing and chatting together, **try hitting that imaginary pause button and count to 10 in your head before saying anything else.**



Helping our children develop their language skills shouldn't feel like we are always questioning and testing them to find out what they know.

Point things out while you are out and about and while you are doing those routine, everyday jobs. Make comments that get your child thinking...

hmm, I wonder  
what that could  
be for...

What do you  
think?

...and as their confidence and skills grow you might find yourself being led on a wonderfully fantastical journey of imagination, story-telling, and lateral thinking.



You could try some of these sentence starters when you are talking and playing together. They will help your child to stretch their thinking, to problem solve, to make predictions and to evaluate. Enjoy being carried along as the conversation takes all kinds of directions through their thoughts and logic.

And don't forget to hit that pause button

What do you think would happen if....?



What do you think will happen next?

What can you tell me about...?



Tell me more about.....

Can you think of another way?

or

What could you do/use instead?



What else could it be used for?

I wonder why...



the Department of Education published

[‘What to Expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents’](#)

Here are a few other ideas taken from it...



**Birth to 3 years old**

Sing songs and rhymes while changing nappies and during other everyday activities

As your child picks up things to explore say the name of the object

Repeat and build on what your child says by adding one or two words

Give 10 seconds to allow your child time to process, understand and think of a reply

**3 – 4 year olds**

Use your body language. Encourage your child to talk by nodding, smiling, and making comments

Introduce new words while doing everyday jobs, when you are playing together, at mealtimes, or while you are out and about

Talk about things that have already happened, and what might happen soon

Play listening games like ‘Simon Says...’

**4 -5 year olds**

Treasure hunts - give your child instructions, directions, or clues that they have to listen carefully to.

Talk out loud about what you are doing and what your child is doing

