

Communication

Quote

Government Advisor Reg Bailey
Chief Executive of the Mothers' Union said...

A 2011 UNICEF study in Spain, Sweden and the UK had shown British parents spend far less time talking to their children than their European counterparts do.

‘People talk sometimes about quality time and actually I think most children don’t need quality time. They need you to be there to talk informally all the time.’

Why is communication important?

Poor language is linked to poor behaviour even in very young children. 2 in 3 language delayed 3 year olds have behaviour problems.

Good communication is the gateway to learning, friendships, academic achievement and success at work

What is communication?

Being able to communicate is not just about talking. Along with getting your own message across, communication is being able to listen, pay attention, interact, play and understand what's being said. These are all fundamental building blocks of communication.

Interaction

We **communicate** and **interact** with each other in different ways; learning the skills of **interaction** is really important for having **good conversations**. We need to learn **when to talk** and **when to listen**, how to **take turns**, how to notice if someone is not listening or bored with what we're saying. We need **words** to do this, but also skills in **looking, listening and noticing** people around us. Children learn from adults by watching how they interact with other adults and with children.

Ideas for Talk

Ensure that you know what topics or songs they are learning at school. This can help you support new words and ideas your child is learning.

Playing board games that involve taking turns helps them to listen and concentrate for longer.

Favourite things

Play a game sharing ideas of favourite things. Ask your child what their favourites are and tell them yours. For example:

My favourite food is...

My favourite TV programme is...

My favourite day is...

My favourite book is...

My favourite sport is...

Keep them talking!

Open questions like 'What are you going to play with today?' encourage children to say more than 'yes' and 'no'.

If they find it difficult to answer such open questions, give them choices, such as 'cars or animals?'

Share information

Spend some time with your child to talk about what they have enjoyed in their day.

A good way to do this is to ask:

“Can you think of 3 good things you did today?”

Share with them good things that have happened in your day.

Thinking Time

Children may need time to think before responding to questions and instructions (processing time).

Give them time without answering for them or finishing their sentences.

Play

Play is a really important part of children's learning and development.

Children learn all kinds of skills through play. They learn **how things work**, how to **interact** and **share** with other children, how to play with different toys and to enter a **world of imagination**.

Playing enables children to **test** things out in a **safe** way, to learn about **emotions** and to **talk** with others. Children often love adults to play with them. It's great if you can follow their lead and join in the fun.

Story time

Take turns to add different parts of a story so you build a story together:

- There was once a...
- Who lived...
- He decided to...
- He met a...
- They went to...
- Then something amazing happened...
- So then they....
- And in the end...

I'm going to the seaside...

In this game, the rule is you can only take something to the seaside if it begins with the letter "s".

Take turns

- "I'm going to the seaside and I'm going to take my scooter"...
- "I'm going to the seaside and I'm going to take my socks"...
- "I'm going to the seaside and I'm going to take my..."

Keep going until you run out of ideas or someone makes a mistake, then change the letter if you want to play again.

Sentence starters

You begin a sentence and someone else finishes it.
Decide whether it's silly or sensible:

- Chicken is my favourite...
- One day I ate an enormous...
- In my garden I saw a...
- I won an amazing...
- The clown I saw was juggling

Questioning



I wonder...

Understanding

Understanding is key to **talking and learning**. Children need to **understand** what single words mean and when words are joined together into **sentences, conversations and stories**.

This takes time and children go through phases where they ask lots of questions. This is a good thing as they're trying to find out **how things work and understand** the world around them. Adults play an important role in answering the many questions children have and in checking out whether children understand.

Riddles

Tell riddles and see if your child can guess the answer:

- It's an animal, it has stripes, it's black and white...
- It's a food, it's round, it's crunchy, it grows on trees, it begins with "a"
- You use it to eat with, it has a round bit at the end, you can stir your tea with it...
- You can use one of these if you make a mistake, they don't work on pen, it starts with "r"
- You can watch this, you can play it, you need a ball and you score goals...

Rhyming Riddles

I leave a trail
I am not a whale
I have a shell
I am a...

My tail is bushy
I don't wear socks
I live in the woods
I am a...

I have some fur
I am not a rat
I say meow
I am a...

Rhyming Clues

Give clues about different things that rhyme... there might be more than one right answer.

- It's a part of your body, it rhymes with bed
- It's something you eat, it rhymes with pyjamas
- It's something you ride in, it rhymes with throat
- It's an animal, it rhymes with peep
- It's an insect, it rhymes with wider

Odd One Out

Which is the odd one out of the following:

- Sheep, cow, chicken, lion
- Apple, orange, grapes, carrot
- Chair, table, sofa, hat
- Cabbage, yoghurt, potato, broccoli
- Football, rugby, judo, cricket

New Words

Although children may know lots of different words it is important to introduce new words and phrases. This helps them to continue learning.

Listening

Listening is an essential skill for **talking** and **learning**.

Everywhere we go there are different noises around us. Sometimes children need a bit of **quiet time** to help them tune into talking rather than the other noises going on around them.

Adults need to show children the way – when we **listen** to children, they learn what to do in order to be **good listeners**.