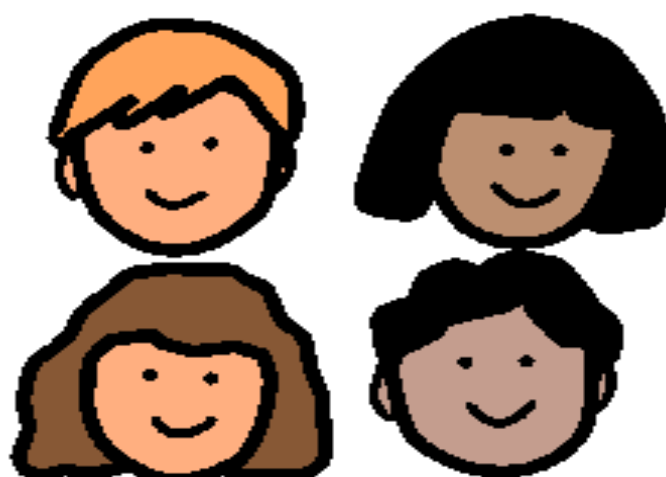


**Early Years  
Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)  
(for 0-5 year olds)**



Supporting your child's communication at  
home

Parent Child Interaction

**Starter Pack**

## The Pack

This home programme pack has been designed by Speech and Language Therapists and is based on the most up-to-date research on communication development in the early years.

This pack focuses on how you can develop your child's communication during your everyday play and interaction together.

Children learn language best when parents and carers share their child's experiences and talk about those experiences in simple language.

Preschool aged children find it difficult to learn from being taught directly, or trying to change their own behaviour. It is easier to help them develop by changing the communication environment around them. This includes the way we speak and interact with them.



### **Why is play so important?**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTLHHq8B\\_Zo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTLHHq8B_Zo)

# Special Time

One way to make sure you are interacting in a way that supports your child's language development, is by setting up a regular 5 minute "special time". In this special time, you can try out different techniques to see which ones help your child's language best.

## HOW?

- Set aside 5 minutes to be on your own with your child.
- Reduce distractions (turn off your phone and the TV, find some time alone with your child..)
- Make sure you won't be interrupted
- Let your child to choose something for you to do together.
- Start your 5 minutes when he / she has made a choice and you are ready to start playing. Your child may need some time to set up the toys before you begin.
- Spend the 5 minutes together doing whatever he / she has chosen. It must be something that you can **do together (see next page for examples)**

### Avoid....

- watching TV or videos
- playing running around games
- reading a story
- sitting and talking
- going for a walk or to a park
- rough and tumble games



## REMEMBER....

Give your child your **undivided attention** for the whole 5 minutes

**Play** is the focus, not talking

**Stop** after 5 minutes



### Before you start:

*Explain to your child about having this time together and that it is his / her job to choose what you do*

### When you have finished:

*Your child can carry on playing if he / she wishes.*

## Tip 1: Get face to face

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VfzkbyuYv0>

One of the most important things you can do to communicate with your child is also the simplest: Position yourself so that your child can look directly into your eyes.

You learn more about your child, because you are at their level and can see their facial

You can see more easily what they are looking at, playing with and enjoying.



Its easier for your child to see your face and make eye contact

Your child will see that you are enjoying yur play with them

**When you play face to face...**

Your child knows you are looking and listening to their attempts to communicate

Your child can see how your mouth moves to form words and watch your eyes to find out what you are looking at

**When talking to your child you could try....**

Getting down on the floor

Lying on your tummy

Holding your child on your knee

**You can make it easier for your child to look into your eyes and have a conversation with you by changing your possition so that you are "face to face".**

## Tip 2: Follow your child's lead

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VfzkbyuYv0>

### What to do



**REMEMBER – THERE'S NO  
RIGHT/WRONG WAY TO  
PLAY**

Look at what your child does  
and make it part of the game!

**WATCH**

**WAIT**

**FOLLOW**

**Follow your  
child's lead**

**TRY NOT TO DIRECT  
YOUR CHILD**

WAIT and give your child  
time to explore and use  
their imagination

**TRY NOT TO  
'ENTERTAIN' YOUR  
CHILD**

WATCH what they are  
doing and join in with  
THEIR ideas

## Tip 3: Ask fewer questions

### Parents ask children questions to:

- Get information, e.g. "what's that?", "what does it do/say...?" etc
- Start a conversation or encourage them to talk e.g. "what did you do at nursery?"

Sometimes people ask two or three questions together without realising it.

The child won't have time to reply! e.g. "How was nursery today?

Did you play with the sand? What did you eat for lunch?"



### When you ask your child a question, your child.....

- Feels under pressure to say something
- Needs to understand what you are asking them and think of an answer
- Needs to think of the correct words and organise a sentence

And they have to do all of this NOW!!!

When adults ask children questions, the answers usually require only a one-word answer. Adults do not want the child to fail so they ask them questions that they know the child already knows the answers to. Therefore, the child might not get the opportunity to use longer sentences or experiment with new words.

### By asking your child fewer questions you will:

- Reduce pressure on them
- Avoid one-word answers or nods
- Allow them to experiment with new words and longer sentences
- Possibly surprise you with new words!



### What could I do instead?

Instead of a question try making a comment, e.g.

"what's that?" becomes "look a bus"

"what are you doing?" becomes "you're jumping"

Sometimes we make a question just with the ending;

"you like biscuits, don't you?" , "that's a car isn't it?"

All you need to do is take off the ending and you will have changed the question into a comment, e.g. "that's a car isn't it?"...

....becomes "that's a car"

## Tip 4: Keep it simple

**Think about the language you use when talking to your child.....**can your child easily understand your sentences and use them to help them learn new words?

**When you use simple language and speak slowly ....**your child will have more chance of understanding you are saying to them.

**If they understands what you are saying....** they will learn language faster.

Children can learn language if they:

- understand the words that are being said around them
- hear simple examples (models) of language which they can try using themselves



Find the right level of words and sentences to use with your child;

- listen to them talking.
- how many words do they put together in a sentence?
- use the same number of words your own sentences or **ADD ONE WORD**
- keep your words simple and consistent!
- Make your voice sounding interesting and as normal as possible.

e.g. If your child uses 4 word sentences..... you use 4 or 5 words

If your child uses 1 word at a time..... you use 1-2 words

If your child says a word incorrectly, or misses a word out, help them by showing them how it's done rather than "correcting" them. This is called modelling

e.g. "mummy there's a dod"..... "oh yes, there's a dog"

**"He goed to the shop"..... "yes, he went to the shop"**

When you model a word or sentence for your child don't ask them to say it correctly after you, but simply let them listen. The last thing they hear in their head is your correct model!

$$1+1=2$$



# Activity Ideas

Here are some activity ideas that you can use during “Special Time”. There are also some suggestions for words, phrases or sounds you could add to your child’s play. Feel free to add any more you think of, but remember to keep it simple. Use lots of repetition of new words, and use your voice to add interest.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Words &amp; Phrases</b>	<b>Sounds</b>
Getting dressed or undressed	“Here’s your head!” “ “Here’s your hand!” “Pants on”, “socks on”, “trousers off”, “jumper off”	“boo!” “Stretch!”
Washing or bathing	“Wash your face” “Wash your tummy” “Dry your hands” “Dry your feet”	“Splash!” “Rub-a-dub-dub!”
Bubbles	“More” or “More bubbles” “Go!”	“Pop!”
Water play	“Water” “bubbles” “Fill it up”, “Empty it out” “Wet sleeves!”	“Splash!” “Squirt!” “Uh-oh!”
Sand play	“Sand” “bucket” “spade” “Dig the sand” “Turn it over” “Knock it down”	“tap tap tap!”
Building bricks	“More bricks” “Up, up, up” “Knock it over”	“Crash!”
Noise-makers	“drum” “rattle” “bells” etc. “bang it” “shake it” “listen” “quiet” “loud” “fast” “slow”	“bang, bang!” “rattle, rattle!” “ring, ring!”
Doll’s House	“dolly” “bed” “chair” “bathroom” “kitchen” “sleeping” “sitting” “cooking”	“ding dong!” “knock knock” “yum, yum”
Cars	“car” “bike” “truck” “bus” “ride” “drive” “crash” “up” “down” “round”	“beep, beep” “vroom!” “crash!”



## Websites

You may also find the following websites helpful:

- ❑ Our speech and language therapy website: <https://www.clch.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy-children>
- ❑ **NSPCC's** 'Look, Say, Sing, Play' campaign' with the following link <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/look-say-sing-play/sign-up>
- ❑ **Vroom:** Boost your child's learning with **Vroom's** fast and fun tips to your phone or via email. <https://www.vroom.org>
- ❑ The **Hungry Little Minds** campaign provides lots of ideas that can help boost your child's learning. [www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk](http://www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk)
- ❑ The **Makaton** Charity <https://www.makaton.org/>
- ❑ **Local Offer website:** (search "SEND local offer with the name of your borough). This website has lots of useful information for parents about local help for children with additional education and/or health needs
- ❑ **Parent forums:** Contact for support if your child has additional education/health need
  - Parents Active (Hammersmith & Fulham) [www.parentsactive.org.uk](http://www.parentsactive.org.uk)
  - Full of Life (RBKC) [www.fulloflifekc.com](http://www.fulloflifekc.com)
  - Make it Happen (Westminster) [www.wppg.org.uk](http://www.wppg.org.uk)
- ❑ **The Communication Trust:** for what to expect at different ages [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)
- ❑ **ICAN:** a children's communication charity [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

### CLCH NHS Trust

The speech and language therapy service is provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust. For more information visit [www.clch.nhs.uk](http://www.clch.nhs.uk) or call us on **020 7266 8777**.