

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



Supporting your child's communication at
home
(Parent Child Interaction)

April 2020

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.

Q: How can I do this?

A: Set up a special time



What is special time?

Special time simply means spending 5 minutes getting down to your child's level and joining in with their play. After conducting a regular 5 minute special time, using parent-child interaction strategies, research has shown that parents increase their confidence using strategies to help their child's language development, the child's average length of utterance increases and the ratio of child to parental speech improved (Faulkus, Tillet et al, 2015).

Why special time?

- 'Special Time' benefits the relationship between you and your child.
- It is the quality of time you spend that's important, not the quantity.
- 'Special Time' encourages you to give your child positive attention for an ordinary activity
- It encourages your child to play and learn new skills.
- It provides you with a special time where you can relax and enjoy time with your child and watch his / her new skills.
- It is difficult to make a change in how you interact with your child 24/7, it is easier to make a change in a short, focussed special time.
- Once you have become confident interacting in this way during special time, you will start to automatically use these skills in other times too.

'Special Time' is time for you and your child to play together **in addition** to the times you already have

Special Time

Why is play so important?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTLLHq8B_Zo

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.

QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE:**Why only 5 minutes?**

You may feel that you want longer than 5 minutes as your child may enjoy the time with you and may not want to stop.

It is important to keep to only 5 minutes because it makes it easier for you to have the Special Time more often. If you spend a long time on it, you are more likely to miss a day when you are busy.

So... keep to 5 minutes. Use a clock / watch / timer to keep the time.

If you keep to this, your child will get used to the routine and know what to expect.

Avoid activities that will need a long time to do or can't be completed in 5 minutes.

How often do I do 'Special Time'?

- Do at least 4 Special Times a week
- Don't do more than 6 in any week
- Don't try doing more than one a day

What if one of us gets home very late, or is away from home?

When this happens, you may only be able to do one or two Special Times in a week. You should be aware though that you will find it harder to develop your new skills because you will have less practice time.

Can you find a day when you can get home a bit earlier?

Could you do your Special Times before you leave for work in the morning?

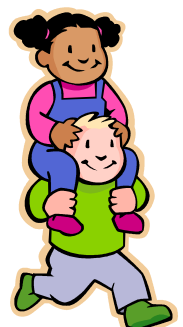
Do as many as you can. Always try to do at least 4.

What time of the day is best?

You can choose any time that is convenient for you.

Some parents like to have their Special Times at the same time every day.

Others like to fit it in when they can.



Work out a system that suits you.

What about the other children?

Other children in the family, especially the little ones, may want to have a Special Time with you as well.

It is important to give the other children in the family their own Special Time too.

When using this pack.... focus on 1 new tip at a time, during your special time. Once you have become confident using the tip, you can try the next one.



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 less 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, they often only require a one-word answer. Adults don't want the child to fail so they often ask questions they know the child already knows the answers to. So 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 slowlyyour 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!

$$1+1=2$$

Tip 5: Expand your child's talking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HKxX8cvbII>

Now that you have been working on keeping your comments simple - at the same length as the sentences your child makes, you can now start to think about how to extend your child's talking.

Children's talking often develops in a step-by-step way:

"mama"
"milk",

"my bus",
"mama go".

"mama eat
banana"

"me go big
bus",

If they are using single words, we need to help them to get to the next step in their language development – two word sentences.

If they are using two word sentences, we need to show them how they can use three words together.

To do this, whenever your child says anything, repeat their sentence back to them as part of your reply.. just **ADD ONE WORD**

For example:

Child: "dog!"

adult: "yes, dog running!" or "yes, big dog!"

Child: "dog eating"

adult: "yes! Dog eating bone!"

Child: "dog eating banana"

adult: "yes! Dog eating yellow banana!"

Don't correct your child, or ask them to repeat it back to you. Just let them hear your sentence as part of your natural reply.

They are learning just from hearing you say it and they will say it when they are ready.



Tip 6: Specific praise

What is praise?

Praise is a way of letting someone know that we have noticed and acknowledged their efforts and achievements. These achievements may be large or small.

Usually we praise children by saying some of the following:

"Well done" *"Good boy"* *"That's good"* *"You are clever"*

Why should I praise my child? Praise makes your child feel:

Confident

Happy with himself

Loved

Important

The more confident your child feels about themselves, the more confident they will be about talking. Giving your child praise helps you:

- Notice the good points
- Feel proud
- Manage their behaviour positively
- Encourage them to behave that way again



How Can I Give Praise So That It Is Meaningful And Effective

What kind?	Example	Benefits
Social praise	Hug, smile or kiss	Avoids your child becoming dependent on praise (a praise junkie!) where they may stop trying to succeed as they already have your attention
Noticing – look out for successes!	It may be something quite small	It's easy to get caught up in noticing where your child did not manage to do the thing you hoped/expected. Noticing the little successes will help both you and them feel positive about movement in the right direction
Specific praise	"good sitting" "good listening" "I like how you chose pink for that cloud"	Your child knows exactly what it is that they have done well, so that they are more likely to do it again in the future.
Meaningful Praise	Don't make something up for the sake of saying something positive	Your child will know if you don't really mean it!

Within this week's special times notice what your child is doing well and give them specific praise to let them know exactly what it is they are doing well.

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
- ❑ 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
 - Full of Life (RBKC) www.fulloflifekc.com
 - Make it Happen (Westminster) www.wppg.org.uk
- ❑ **The Communication Trust:** for what to expect at different ages www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk
- ❑ **ICAN:** a children's communication charity 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 or call us on 020 7266 8777

References

G. Falkus, C. Tilley, C Thomas, H. Hockey, A. Kennedy; Assessing the effectiveness of parent-child interaction therapy with language delayed children: A clinical investigation; City University (2015).