

# Your child's talking

Information Sheet on Speech and Language December 2010



## The Importance of Speech, Language and Communication Development

Speech, language and communication are central to each child's potential to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and ultimately achieve economic well being.

It has been recognised that if a child receives the right help early on, he or she has a better chance of developing good communication skills. Children who have poor communication skills are less likely to do well at school and may have behavioural problems or emotional and psychological difficulties and therefore poor employment prospects.

Parents and carers play an important part in ensuring their children develop good communication skills as the most critical time for a child's development is from birth to 3 years old. The children's centres recognise this and offer good quality play that enhances the communication skills of all children.

## Top Tips for Talking!

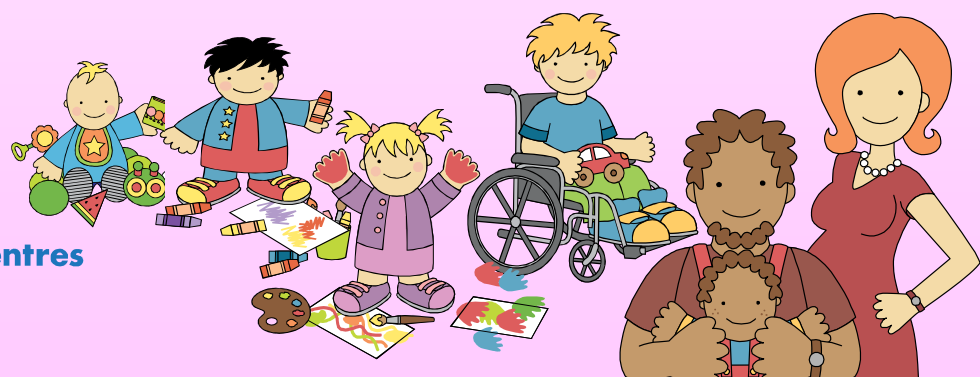
- Talk to your child about things you see and do.
- Have fun singing songs and nursery rhymes, do the actions!
- Give your child books – at first they might just chew them but soon they'll start to look at the pictures.
- Read stories to your child – don't forget the funny voices!
- Respond to your child's sounds, repeat them back and wait.
- Take your child's dummy out when they are talking, singing and playing.



## Listening and Responding

Children can't learn a language unless they listen to what people say. They also need to learn what is important to listen to out of all the noise going on around them. For example, they need to know to ignore a loud cough, but not a loud "NO".

Children also need to remember what they have heard. Learning to listen, remember and act on an instruction is a skill we all need throughout our lives.



## Activities to Encourage Listening

- Stand still and listen to noises outside. Name the sounds, for example, bus, plane and bird.
- Listen to quiet sounds such as a watch ticking or a cat purring.
- Record every day sounds like the vacuum, the bath filling, a phone ringing or a dog barking. Play back the recording and see if your child can point out what made the sound.
- Stand behind your child and rattle or drop different objects, for example, keys, paper or pennies. When they turn round, ask them to pick which one made the noise.
- Collect a box of toy animals or objects that make a noise, for example, cars, trains, bells, phones or fire engines. Talk about them.
- Collect tins or yoghurt cartons and half fill them with small objects so that when the carton is shaken it makes a noise, for example, peas, rice, little stones or paperclips. If you make two of each noise, you can play at matching them. Sellotape the lids on firmly so they are safe.
- Read often to your child, but stop frequently and ask questions to see if they have understood.

## What do children's centres offer?

Toys that can help with speech and language can be borrowed from the Toy Bus, ask your children's centre when the bus is in the area. Books can also be borrowed from most children's centre receptions.

Ask your children's centre receptionist if you would like to have a chat with someone from the team, such as a health visitor or childcare and family worker, about your child's speech and language.

The children's centres have groups such as Small Talk (1-2 years) or Play with Language (2-3 years). Contact your local children's centre to ask about the availability of places.

Joanna Greaves, a Speech and Language Therapist, also works at the children's centres. She is happy to talk through any aspect of communication you may be concerned about. Joanna will also be able to refer any children to the mainstream service of Speech and Language Therapy if this is needed.



Joanna is based at Hob Moor Children's Centre and can be contacted on 07766785654

## Useful websites

[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk) - Children's communication charity with top tips for talking as well as information for parents.

[www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org) - The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists provides information about finding a speech and language therapist.

**For more information about Children's Centres please contact the Family Information Service on 01904 554444 or visit [www.yorkchildrenscentres.org.uk](http://www.yorkchildrenscentres.org.uk). Up to date leaflets on this and other topics can also be downloaded from the website.**