

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Early Language Skills



Some everyday strategies to help children develop early language skills throughout the day

- **BE AT THE CHILD'S LEVEL:** This will usually be on the floor!
- **GET THE CHILD'S ATTENTION:** Call the child's name or touch them to encourage them to look at you.
- **GIVE THE CHILD CHOICES:** Give the children choices. For example, if the child wants a drink ask *"Do you want milk or pop?"*. Do not expect them to say the answer. They can make a choice by pointing to what they want and making a sound. Give them praise for this and reward them with their choice while saying the word for them.
- **TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU AND THE CHILD ARE DOING:** For example, if the child is playing with a car, you can say *"driving the car"*, *"car goes fast"*. Try not to ask too many questions as this puts pressure on the child.
- **BE A GOOD MODEL:** Do not try to correct the child. Instead repeat what the child has said in the correct way. For example, if the child says *"tar"* for car, you could say *"yes, it's a car"*. If the child says *"girl dog walking"* then you say *"yes, the girl is walking the dog"*.
- **COPY THE CHILD AND ADD A BIT MORE:** If the child uses single words or short sentences, you can model a longer sentence. For example, if the child says *"dog"*, then you say *"big dog"*. If the child says *"boy sit there"*, then you say *"yes, the boy is sitting on the chair"*.
- **GIVE LOTS OF TIME:** Give the child plenty of time to talk, don't always expect a response as soon as you have finished talking. Listen to what they are saying and not how they are saying it.
- **SHOW CHILDREN WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT:** If a child doesn't seem to understand, or you know that the word is new to a child, show what you are talking about either by doing the action yourself or pointing to what you mean, (e.g. pretend to brush your hair if you are talking about brushing hair.)
- **FILL THE GAP:** Use a phrase and leave out the last word for the child to fill in the gap e.g. *"The hat is on my.....(head)"* You can also do this with nursery rhymes (e.g. *"Twinkle, twinkle, little(star)"*)

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE!:** Use phrases that are only slightly longer than the phrases than the child uses (e.g. If the child puts 2 words together, you use phrases containing 3 or 4 words e.g. “more pop” – “more red pop”)
- **KEEP SAYING IT:** Use important words and simple phrases over and over again the same activities as part of a daily routine (e.g. “all gone” “shoes off” “arms up”)

Practical Activities

Any time is a good time for learning language. Use everyday activities that the child enjoys doing such as sharing a book, singing together, mealtime, bath times, going shopping, at the park, riding on the bus or train.

BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY HAVE FUN!

If you require any further support/advice please contact via the following email

Walsall.slt@nhs.net

In the subject line please state **FAO the Virtual School Speech and Language Therapy Support team** to ensure your message is actioned by the relevant team.