

GENERAL LANGUAGE STIMULATION

Children learn new skills from the adults around them, so it is important you give them a good model. Learning language is no different.

How do I get and maintain my child's attention?

- Be interested in what your child has to say, not the way they say it
- Get down to their physical level (be face to face) to establish eye contact
- Use facial expressions and an exaggerated voice to show that what you are doing is interesting and fun
- Imitate their actions and sounds
- Observe them to help understand their feelings and interests
- Wait and give a little extra time for them to express themselves

What do I talk about?

- Songs, nursery rhymes, stories and poems all help to develop a child's awareness of rate, rhythm and sounds
- Talk about what you see and how you feel
- Talk about what you are doing together
- Talk about what is important to your child
- Talk about the 'here and now'. It's much easier for children to understand when you talk about the objects, people and events they can see. Try not to use language that is too abstract or ambiguous.

How do I talk to my child?

- Speak clearly, leave pauses – try not to be too fast
- Repeat words and short phrases when you talk to your child during play or when giving instructions; this gives more opportunities for them to hear the way you are speaking
- Try not to correct pronunciation or ask them to say it the right way – they would do it if they could. It's better to provide a good model
- If your child points to something without speaking, offer them a choice e.g. 'do you want milk or juice?'
- If they don't make any attempt to say what they want but continue to point, label their choice for them e.g. 'Juice? You want Juice? Ok, here's your juice'
- If they can't make themselves clearer, the listener must make the extra effort to try to understand
- Everything has a name. Use verbal labels to help expand vocabulary
- Use short, simple sentences. Point to what you are talking about.
- Use natural gesture when you talk
- Describe what you are doing using short phrases and sentences
- Repeat and add information to your child's comments,
e.g. Child – 'truck'
Adult – 'yes there's a big truck'

Talking and listening should be fun things to do! By concentrating on topics your child is interested in you will help maintain and develop their attention span. The actual topic is not important: the child's interest is.