**Evidence to underpin the Chatting Together messages about early language and communication**

* **Get down to my level**
* **Listen watch and respond to me**
* **Watch and wait before joining in**

Young children’s language learning is supported by use of contingent language, that is, language that matches what they are paying attention to at the time. One study helped parents to use more of these contingent responses, resulting in better engagement with their wee one and progress with language skills (Masek et al., 2021).

Back-and-forth (serve and return) interactions between parents and little ones are also important to early language learning (Chen et al., 2023) as well as helping with turn taking, social interaction, and other areas of learning (Donnelly et al., 2021).

* **Use a sing song voice**
* **Talk to me whatever we are doing**

There is lots of evidence that wee ones learn words and develop their language skills when we share books with them, tell them stories and sing with them. (Mustonen et al., 2024).

Maybe you’ve wondered why we often tend to chat to babies in a sing song voice. This is actually something that is common for parents all around the world. When we speak a bit more slowly, using a higher pitch and exaggerated intonation, we are supporting language skills including social language development and turn taking (Ferjan et al., 2019).

* **Our best place is face to face**
* **Copy my sounds, funny faces and gestures**
* **Copy my sounds or words and add a bit more**

When we notice what a baby is looking at, and repeat their sounds, we are helping them to learn new words (Goldstein et al., 2010). Some researchers have also found that babies may begin to use new sounds in their speech, when we copy their vocalisations (Goldstein and Schwade, 2008).

With slightly older children, as well as repeating back, it can help to add a word or two to extend their sentence. This can also be helpful for children who are slower to talk (Levickis et al., 2014).

**Evidence in support of the ‘Getting ready to Chat Together’ messages**

* **Help me to tune in by putting your phone away and turning off the TV**

Research suggests that young children’s quality of play and ability to focus is affected when the TV is on in the background (Schmidt et al., 2008) with the quality of adult-child interaction also being negatively affected (Kirkorian et al., 2009)

* **Be sure to use your home language or languages**

When parents use their home language, they model language in all its fulness, while also connecting their children with their wider family and culture.

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