

Chatting Together Guide for the Early Years Workforce



This guide is intended to support anyone working with families of babies and young children. The guide introduces the Chatting Together key messages for early language and communication, highlighting why these are so important and how they can be shared with parents and carers.

What is Chatting Together?

Chatting Together consists of four key things that adults can do every day to nurture little ones' early language and communication, while also lighting up their minds and creating a loving connection that will last a lifetime.



Chatting Together helps all little ones, including those whose development isn't going as expected. There are four messages for bump to baby and four for toddlers and young children.

There are also four additional ideas for families who need a bit more help to 'get ready' to Chat Together



Chatting Together messages are powerful

Little ones thrive when their special people lovingly bring language-rich responsive interactions into together time and daily routines. Parents may feel unsure about how to interact with a very young baby or might not know how important it is to respond to a little one who is not talking yet.

All parents can make a positive difference for their little ones when they respond to their needs early and often within nurturing interactions and this is especially important for families affected by poverty and disadvantage. When parents feel confident in their use of responsive interactions, this improves outcomes for their children.

You can make the difference

by gently sharing and modelling the Chatting Together messages with bump, baby and beyond, whenever you spend time with a family. Build parents' confidence by noticing all the little things they are already doing to help their little one feel safe and happy.

Families value advice and support from early years professionals but can sometimes feel overwhelmed or confused when there are too many messages to take on board. By sharing the same four Chatting Together messages, practitioners including midwives, health visitors, family nurses, speech and language therapists, childminders, early years practitioners and others can provide parents with consistent and clear information and advice.

Starting a Chatting Together Conversation

To help you start a conversation with parents, each Chatting Together postcard includes information on 'why' it matters and 'how' to do it. Parents might not realise all the ways they already support early communication every day.



Encourage parents to listen and watch to tune in to their baby's early signals. Share ideas about how they might respond.



Highlight links between Chatting Together and other aspects of development, such as attachment, wellbeing, play, learning and social development.



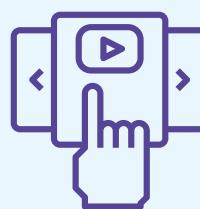
Empower parents by pointing out all the ways they are already connecting with and responding to their little one, even if they don't realise they are doing it.



Explore with parents what works for them within their everyday activities. Some parents may find reading tricky or they might not know many nursery rhymes. They might try chatting about the pictures in a book or making up songs within routines.



Model how parents might respond to their little one to keep the interaction going. Try labelling or commenting in a sing song voice.



Choose a BBC CBeebies Parenting video and watch it together. Ask parents what they like about the video and if there is anything they would try at home.



Share one of the Chatting Together postcards with parents, helping them to understand why it matters and how to do it.



Where to find Chatting Together messages, postcards and videos

The Chatting Together messages are available from Parent Club. To find them, follow the links from the 'development and growing up' tab.

Chatting Together messages in brief

The best way to share the Chatting Together messages is to use the postcards and posters, or to explore them with a family on Parent Club. For convenience the messages are included in brief below. The QR codes below will allow you to see the messages in full on the Parent Club website.

Bump to Baby



- 1 Listen, watch and respond to me.
- 2 Use a sing song voice.
- 3 Our best place is face to face.
- 4 Copy my sounds, funny faces and gestures.

Toddler to Young Child



- 1 Get down to my level.
- 2 Watch and wait before joining in.
- 3 Copy my sounds or words and add a bit more.
- 4 Talk to me whatever we are doing.

Getting Ready to Chat Together messages and resources

To support families who need more support to get ready to Chat Together you might start with one or more of the Getting Ready to Chat Together messages.

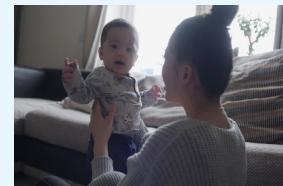
For example, could you help parents to plan for-quiet time with the TV off or to leave their phone in the kitchen while they do bedtime?

To help you to share these messages, BBC CBeebies Parent videos related to each message are available using the QR codes below:

1: Let's chat and play every day



Bump



Baby



Toddler

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



Baby



Toddler

3: If I nap with a dummy, put it away when I'm alert



4: Be sure to use your home language or languages



Evidence to support the Chatting Together key messages

Chatting Together messages are based on strong evidence about what really helps little ones. An evidence summary as well as a range other useful resources can be found on the National Early Language and Communication team's practice sharing site <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/creatingtheconditions/>