

Talking to your child is really important. You can have lots of fun singing rhymes and songs, tickling or playing clapping games (Pat-a-Cake) and later on word games ('Simon Says' and 'I Spy'). Here are some other tips:

Get your child's full attention first

Get down to the child's level and engage their attention before speaking or asking a question - say their name to encourage them to stop and listen. Talking about what your child is interested in will also help to gain their attention.

Make learning language fun

Funny voices, rhymes, noises and singing all help children learn language. Be silly - often the daftest things gain their attention.

Imitate children's language

With very young children, simply repeat back sounds, words and sentences. This demonstrates that you value all they say. This can be anything from "Ba" to "Oh, you liked the apple?"

Make it easy for your child to listen and talk

It is easier for your child to know what to listen to if your voice is not being masked by the television or music. Quiet time helps them focus on your words. If your child uses a dummy, make sure that it is not in the way of their talking. Keep dummies to sleep times.

Build on what children say

Talk very clearly and add one or two words to your child's sentence - if your child says "Look car" you could say "Look, red car".

Tips
for helping your child develop their language and communication skills.

Give children time to respond

Children often need time to put their thoughts together before answering, so give them longer to respond than you would an adult.

Demonstrate the right way

Praise your child's efforts, even if the results aren't perfect - simply say the correct pronunciation rather than point out the mistake e.g. Your child says "Look at the dod", you can say "Yes, it's a dog".

These tips are taken from I CAN's **Ready Steady Talk** pack. **Ready Steady Talk** is a fun-filled activity pack developed by speech and language specialists. It provides you with vital tools to help your child develop their speech and language skills. Buy online for £5.99 + postage.

Worried about your child's talking?

I CAN's Help Enquiry Service gives free help and advice from a speech and language therapist.

Call 020 7843 2544

Service open 9:30am-4:30pm, Monday-Wednesday.



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