



Speech and Language Therapy Advice Sheet

How can I help my child to talk? – More Words

For young children, their parents/carers are the best people to help them learn to talk and children want to talk to their parents/carers more than anyone else.

If your child has started to use a few words, but you are concerned that they don't have enough words or hasn't started to join words together yet, these simple strategies are the best way to help them on their way to talking:

🕒 **See the advice sheet 'How can I help my child to talk? – First Words'**

Please see our advice sheet 'How can I help my child to talk? – First Words'. Even if your child has started to use some words, it is important to use the strategies that are on the 'First words' advice sheet first, and then you can add the strategies on the 'More words' advice sheet.

🕒 **Offer your child choices**

You can do this in your Special Play Time (see First Words advice sheet) or in your everyday routines. Instead of asking yes/no questions offer your child choices which will help them to practice their words. For example, if you are giving your child a snack say 'Do you want apple or banana?' or if you are playing say 'do you want the big train or the little train?' Hold up the items as you say them so your child can see the object and hear the word at the same time.

🕒 **Think about using different types of words**

Children need to know lots of different types of words before they will be ready to start joining them together into simple phrases. Try to make sure your child is hearing a range of words when you play together **e.g. Naming words** (ball, apple, mummy), **Action words** (jump, eat, wash), **Social words** (night night, hello, bye), **Position words** (in, on, up) **Describing words** (soft, red, big)

🕒 **Expand your child's language**

If your child uses a range of words already, they may be ready to start joining words together into simple phrases. Children often need to have about 50 words that they can say before they are ready to join words together. You can help them to expand their language by repeating back a word that they have said and adding on another word. For example, if your child says 'car' you say 'car, push the car' or 'green car' or 'big car' etc. Or if your child says 'baby sleeping' you say 'yes baby sleeping. Baby is sleeping in a cot'. This helps to model the next stage of language development for when they are ready to have a go themselves.

🕒 **Do not correct their attempts to say a word**

If your child tries to say a word but it's not clear e.g. 'poon' instead of 'spoon' try not to respond in a negative way e.g. 'no that's not how you say it'. Instead, say the word clearly for them in a positive way 'yes, spoon. It is a spoon'. Stress the sounds they missed or said incorrectly e.g. 'sp'. Don't ask your child to say it again. This allows the child to hear the correct way of saying the word. Remember that children's speech sounds can take several years to develop and it is typical that children will not pronounce words clearly when they are first learning how to talk.

If you have tried using these strategies and you are still concerned about your child's talking you can either:

- Contact your Health Visitor for advice
- Contact your child's Early Years Setting, if they have one, for advice
- Contact your local Children's Centre for information on groups that may be running
- Look on our website for the 'Quick Reference Guide'. This is a guide on when may be the best time to refer your child to Speech and Language Therapy. The referral forms and further advice sheets are also available on the website

<https://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/childrens-centre/your-childs-hospital-journey/therapy-services/childrens-therapy-referral/>

You can access further information from the following websites:

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk> go to 'Resources - Resources for Parents' and look for the 'Through the eyes of a child' videos.

<http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk>

<https://radld.org>

<https://www.ican.org.uk>

<https://www.afasic.org.uk>

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>