



## Tips for developing speech and language with young children

1. Expand language eg if your child says "phone" you could say "yes, the phone is ringing".
2. Don't ask your child to repeat words- just wait and leave a gap, and they may imitate you. The more you repeat words and phrases, the more likely they are to imitate when they are ready.
3. Avoid demand speech eg "say phone".
4. Don't put pressure on children to speak; they will communicate when they are ready.
5. Reinforce the etiquette of conversation with children who are not yet verbal through games such as peek-a boo. These games develop non- verbal conversation skills such as eye-contact, anticipation and listening. These skills are equally important to conversation as talking!
6. Give choices verbally, as well as offering.
7. Model by repeating what children say, and add a word, or expand their vocabulary. When talking with young children, remember to use verbs as well as nouns. This will really help their development of understanding of instructions. For example even with young children say "Put on your coat", not just "coat on".
8. When giving instructions to young children, show what you mean as you talk. Keep instructions short and concise.
9. Provide a commentary to activities, so children hear words in context and have better chance of understanding them. Children need to hear a word over 100 times in context before they fully understand it and so can use it appropriately.
10. Don't always simplify. Children need to hear normal adult speech too!