

Speech, language & communication

It starts with you!

Parents are often a child's very first teachers and those who actively play a part can have a great impact on the child's ability to communicate verbally. Talking to babies, and having fun with nursery rhymes and songs is a great way to lay the groundwork when it comes to learning speech.

While there is no magic formula to help your child talk, there are things you can do to help with your child's development. The process of talking involves listening, understanding, thinking, wanting and needing to speak, and being able to coordinate all the right muscles.

Talking to babies everyday is important as babies learn to talk from listening to others. Communication should be fun and this is the essence of baby talk. Babble and baby talk is an essential step in early language development. Talking can easily fit into your daily routine.

If a child can start school with good speech and language skills they can maximise their full personal and social potential. These skills underpin all areas of a child's development. If you think your child's communication skills are not developing as they should discuss with your health visitor or your child's nursery.

Dummies

Prolonged dummy use and thumb sucking for long periods each day can affect a child's speech and language development, as well as teeth alignment. They also reduce babbling and a child's experimentation with sounds which is an important step in learning to talk.

If your toddler or child continually uses a dummy after 12 months it may affect speech and language development by restricting tongue movement.

TV tips

For children under two years even children's TV has been found to have limited value. It is suggested that children of this age find it more difficult to learn new words from the TV than they do in a face-to-face situation.*

Children under two should not be left watching screens on their own, because research has shown that this may slow language development.

*Source: www.gov.uk - Research Report DFE-RR134