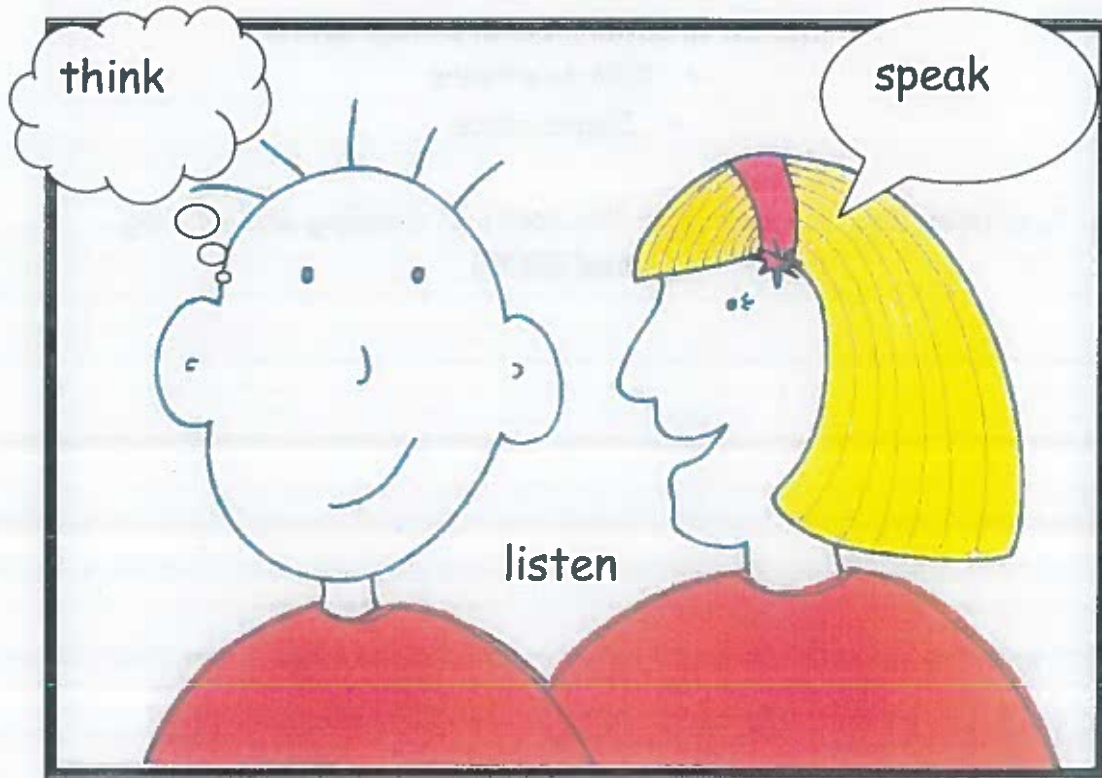


Helping Your Child to be a 'Confident Communicator'



Why are Speaking and Listening so important?

Speaking and listening are at the heart of children's learning. Children need to be confident communicators and active listeners in order to learn about the world they live in. Language skills are crucial and children begin to develop these skills from birth.

At school children are taught to:

- Think about what they say
 - Choose the right words
- Listen to others before they speak
 - Talk to others
 - Share ideas

'Listening and Speaking are the roots of reading and writing'
(Ofsted 2005)

Parents' Role

Parents and carers play a crucial role in developing children's communication skills.

From the moment of birth parents are a child's first teachers and provide a powerful example of good communication.

Research shows that even very tiny babies understand the rules of conversation and can 'take turns' in communicating with an adult, by copying facial expressions for example.

Conversation with parents has been found to be one of the most important factors influencing children's achievement.



A Good Speaker...

...uses good
vocabulary

...is clear
about
what they
mean

...makes eye
contact with
the listener

...makes a longer
contribution
than just one or
two words

...uses facial
expression
and gestures

...speaks in a
clear voice

Developing Talk

From the very earliest stages parents are teaching their children to communicate. Through playing, chatting, singing, commenting and questioning, parents are modelling speaking all the time.

Here are some ways to develop your child's speaking skills:

- **Make time to talk to your child**
- **Encourage your child to talk and answer questions**
 - **Listen patiently**
- **Actively encourage longer conversations**
 - **Asking questions**
 - **Be a good role model**

Things to Talk About and Listen to ...

...favourite food



...the school day



...photographs

...books

...pictures

...friends

...a journey or trip

...special events



...something in a comic or newspaper

...games

...recipes

...instructions for making

...explanations of how things work

Children love to make up their own versions of stories.

Encourage your child to finish the lines of poems and rhymes.

Sing along to the radio and CDs together.

Children love word games.

BOOKS, SONGS AND RHYMES Teach your children nursery rhymes, sing songs and share books with them every single day. Children can learn an enormous number of new and exciting words from sharing and talking about a book. Nursery rhymes and songs teach children about sound patterns and how to have fun with words.

Children like to describe and play guessing games.

Children love to hear familiar stories over and over again.

Children love big, fancy words for things. They remember tricky words.

Developing Listening

Speaking and listening go hand in hand. Listening skills are important for all sorts of reasons. Here are some ways to develop your child's listening skills:

- Story tapes, songs and rhymes in the car and elsewhere
- Children's radio
- Ask them to follow clear simple instructions
- Give them the opportunity to make choices - 'Would you like to wear a blue jumper or a red one today?'
- Take turns in conversations with them and encourage them to listen to your contribution.
- Play language games - 'I-Spy', '20 questions', 'What am I?', 'Continue the story' - you start a story, the children carry on.
- Enjoy telling jokes and encourage the re-telling of them.
- Encourage the use of the telephone - within reason!
- Take time to answer your child's questions - model being a good listener!

A Good Listener...

...makes eye contact with
the speaker

...listens carefully

...responds appropriately to
the speaker

...asks relevant questions

...turns the body to face the
person who is speaking

...turns off distracting noises
such as the radio or television

Asking Questions...

It's really tricky to know the kinds of questions to ask children either to make them think or when they are reading. These are the kinds of questions that the majority of children can answer by the time they are six.

Pre-school

Find one like this.
What's this?
What colour is this?
What did the ... say?
What can you see?
Show me the...
Is it X or Y?
Who is this?

Foundation Stage

Find one that is... can...
What's happening?
Who is... ? When did... ?
Where's the... ?
Finish this sentence...
What is this for?
Tell me about this thing?
What does it do?
Find one that is X and Y.
How are these different?
What else is a X? (category)
What else could they... ?

Year One

What will happen next?
What is ... going to say?
How did he... ?
How else could he do it?
How are these the same?
What's your favourite... ?
Tell me one that's not...
What is a... ?
Which one is... ?
How did he feel?
What have they done so far?

Year Two

What will happen if he... ?
Why did you pick that one?
How did that happen?
What could he do?
What would you do if... ?
Why is it made of that?
How can we tell?
Why can't he... ?
Why do you like that one?
If you were that character, what would you say/do?

Games are a great help...

Games encourage us to develop and use vocabulary. Some encourage us to describe well, make associations or categorise things. Playing games as a family makes learning enjoyable.

This list comprises just some of the games that are currently on the market. Enjoy....

Call my Bluff / Balderdash

20 Questions

Pass the bomb!

Scattergories

Guess who?

Pictionary

Top trumps

Tension

Family Fortunes

Charades

Brain box (various)

Who's in the bag?

Cranium

Happy families

I spy...

Alphabet Soup

Don't Say it!

Yes! No!

Hedbanz

Herd of Words

Wild World Lotto (or similar)

Find the rhyme puzzles

Five Second Rule!

Taboo!

An alphabet of.... (e.g vegetables)

Articulate

The Word Association Game

Last Word

Man Bites Dog

Guess my object

Please share any that you find with us!

