

Supporting your child's speech development

Here are some ideas of things you can do to help your child's speech development:

- Have frequent conversations, giving your child the opportunity to talk about their thoughts and how they are feeling.
- Answer your child's questions and (where appropriate) give them extra relevant information.
- Enrich vocabulary during every day activities, for example going shopping, preparing a meal or going for a walk in the park. Name objects and activities and use words to describe them. For example, *"Look, a hairy dog!"* *"Would you like a delicious ice cream?"* or *"You whizzed down the slide."*
- Provide opportunities for your child to socialise with other children.
- Encourage conversations with others. Demonstrate turn-taking, waiting until someone else has finished talking, listening to others and using expressions such as *"please"*, *"thank you"* and *"can I?"*
- Look at a range of story and non-fiction books together and talk about the story/text and pictures.
- Encourage your child to talk in full sentences, avoid second-guessing what they are trying to say or finishing their sentence for them.
- Ask your child to predict possible endings to stories and events.
- Play word games such as saying words that start with the same sound or inventing nonsense rhymes.
- Encourage your child to eat independently, particularly solid food. As your child chews, they exercise the muscles necessary for effective speech development. If the jaw and tongue muscles are not fully developed, this may affect the pronunciation of certain phonemes (letter sounds).