

# It's good to talk



**A** hot topic amongst educators over the last 18 months has been a concern about speech and language development amongst primary aged pupils. Some toddlers and pupils in Early Years setting appear to have had some speech and language delay. This may partly be a product of Covid and the impact of less social interaction with other children and extended family members. I suspect it is also due to the growth of use of digital devices by adults and children which can, of course, enhance learning and development but can also impact on the amount of face-to-face talk for some children.

So, how can we help as parents and teachers? Here are some practical tips as to how to promote good speech and language development.

#### Toddlers

- Use simple instructions but using whole sentences, "Put your

shoes on please."

- Increase your child's vocabulary by giving them choices and describing things to them. "Would you like the crunchy red apple or the ripe green pear?"

- Turn off the TV or devices when chatting as

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**Talk as you complete chores with your child. They will love to help and will be learning vocabulary along the way.**



**OPEN EVENTS** from 9.45 am  
Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022\*

\*geared to Reception Entry 4+

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the background noise will be distracting.

- Talk as you complete chores with your child. They will love to help and will be learning vocabulary along the way.
- If a child says a word incorrectly there is no need to point it out but simply say the word properly when you repeat it back to them.

**Make time to talk - consider a hot chocolate date or a short walk together in order to make time for talking.**

### Primary aged pupils

- Peer talk becomes more important particularly when taking turns and resolving minor conflicts.
- Encourage your child to use complete sentences and to use question words when asking.
- TAG is a technique we use at school. We encourage pupils to talk to their peer, ask for what they want and get help if they need it. This is designed to build their confidence.

- It can be tempting to talk for your child or even finish their sentences. Try not to do so!
- Continue to limit screen time and be sure that time for talking is uninterrupted wherever possible.
- Car journeys can be a useful time for a trickier chat or when completing a low demand task together such as some mindful colouring.
- Make time to talk - consider a hot chocolate date or a short walk together in order to make time for talking.

### Talking with your teen

- Help your teenager to think for themselves as they will be increasingly influenced by peers. Things like, "What do you think about that?" or "How do you feel about it?"
- Aim for talk based on information and facts not just emotion or reaction.
- Try not to assume e.g. that you

- know what's wrong, that you know what your teen will say. Aim to listen actively.
- Limit judgemental language as this will shut down dialogue.
- Stick to open questions like "How are you doing with your homework?"
- Be supportive and aim for an approach that suggests, "We can sort this out together."

### Self-talk

- Children can learn negative self-talk from us. "Oh, I was rubbish at maths" or "Silly me, I have forgotten again." Be careful with how you model self-talk.
- Positive self-talk can take practice and is best done regularly. Perhaps end each day with asking your child about



[www.wordsforlife.org.uk/](http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/)  
activities

Good luck. Keep talking! 

the best three things that have happened that day or what they feel proud of as they come home from school on a Friday.

Given plenty of opportunities children's talk can be rich, varied and at times hilarious. It is most certainly worth investing some time to develop speech and language skills.

### Finally, some useful resources should you want to learn more about this topic:

*How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish remains an excellent read.

And finally two websites full of practical suggestions and resources:  
[www.ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/parents](http://www.ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/parents)

Parents may be interested to join us for our next parent webinar *Navigating Friendships* on Thursday 17th March 2022 at 11a.m. Our Deputy Head, Wendy Gibbs, Resident Psychologist, Dr Anna Shipton and Life Matters Co-ordinator, Rachel Churchley will be ready to present on this important topic and answer any questions you may have. Further details are available via [www.stcatherines.info/lep-prep-homel-prep-school-events](http://www.stcatherines.info/lep-prep-homel-prep-school-events)

