

Developing Language Through Play

Children play because they enjoy it! They are unaware of the many benefits it has to their motor, language and social skills. So, when children are playing with us, they are learning in a natural way.



Play helps language to develop because:

- It focuses children's attention
- It helps children to imitate actions and sounds
- It encourages turn taking
- It helps children to anticipate what comes next
- Instructions and words (vocabulary) are familiar
- Language can be simple
- It's naturally social and fun!

- Try and **make some specific time** to play so that you can both enjoy the experience even if it's just 10-15 mins.
- Get down and **join in** with your child.
- **Let your child lead** the play – copy their actions and what they do.
- Occasionally you can **change what you do** – use a loud/quiet voice, add a new action. This will keep your child's interest for longer. Then they might try to copy you and learn a new way to play.
- **Pause and wait after** you make a comment - give your child time to respond in their way e.g. gesture, sign, symbols or spoken words.
- Use **fun sounds** during play e.g. zoom, wheeeee, baaa, sssss (it's ok to be silly)
- **Talk about what you're doing** at your child's level e.g.
 - “again”, “stop”, “pop”
 - “wash teddy”, “brush teeth”, “drive car”
 - “fly big plane”, “stir the dough”
 - “put the sugar in the bowl”, “find the red apple”
- Try to **use specific labels** to help develop vocabulary (e.g. “upstairs”, “wash toes”, “little foot”, “lid on pot”. Try to avoid using lots of vague words such as “in here”, “that one”, “there”.
- Talk about your child's **actions**: “oh...baby tired”, “open the door”.
- Try to **avoid asking lots of questions** all the time e.g. “What's that?” “Who is it?” “Where does it go?” Instead **change your questions into comments** e.g. “Wow, a train” “Look it's Peppa”, “It goes through the tunnel”



Most of all make it **FUN** and enjoy your time playing together!

