

...for positive interaction and communication

Get down to your child's level, e.g. if they are playing on the floor, sit on the floor with them and make eye contact before following our top 10 tips:

Top 10 tips

1 Know your child and alter the environment – for example, think about distractions such as the TV, comfort, motivation, understanding and interest.

2 Doing things together is important for learning – children will learn most effectively when their day consists of a combination of both child-led and adult-led activities.

3 Playing is fun – develop special time, 5-10 minutes daily of quiet time (not active play) where you play with your child on a 1:1 basis at home, for example, sharing a book, talking about their day.

4 Model words correctly (expand rather than correct) – listen and acknowledge what your child has said, add in any missing words, use the correct pronunciation of sounds, this reinforces to the child that you have listened to what they have said, it also gives the child the opportunity to hear the correct pronunciation of the word, with additional language to extend their sentences and vocabulary, for example, "I goed park yesterday and went in net", "yes you went to the park yesterday and you were in goal".

5 Match language to their level and talk about their interests – e.g. talk about what they have just built on Minecraft.

6 Give choices – give your child a choice of 2 items to encourage communication, would you like an apple or an orange? Would you like to play on the swing or the slide?

9 Reduce questions – questions can be hard to understand and respond to, e.g. what did you do at school today? Try the five finger rule, e.g. for every question have four comments to back it up.

7 Reduce / limit screen time – this includes TV, smart phones, tablets and the use of games on consoles. Research shows that screen time does NOT replace you talking with your child.

8 Share books and talk about the story with them afterwards. Talk about what they like reading, e.g. fiction v. non-fiction and who their favourite character is and why.

10 Encourage communication and enjoy interactions! Try to reduce pressure on your child talking, rather accept any communication attempts and encourage these interactions by allowing them time to communicate their needs – language and speech will come later.