

## Where to start if your child isn't talking yet

There are lots of different reasons why children might be later to start saying words. Below are some ideas to try that could help, with links to our Toolkit sheets which contain more information.

If you see progress, keep going!! Progress comes in little steps and can take time.

It is important that your child understands words, before they will start to use them. Our [First Words](#) toolkit sheet has lots of information about both understanding and saying words.

A really good way of encouraging communication skills and reducing frustration is offering choices. Our sheet about [Making choices](#) has lots of ideas.

There are some really useful general tips in our [Top 10 SLT tips \(under 5 years\)](#) and we have created some video [Animations](#) with key things to try.

Sometimes children find they can get what they need without talking. [Creating Opportunities to Communicate](#) gives lots of practical ideas for ways to encourage children to try talking instead.

Accept all attempts to communicate, including sounds and gestures, and respond as if they were words. Look at [Encouraging Early Sounds](#) for ideas.

Play and interaction skills are very important building blocks for learning to communicate. Joining in with your child's play can create lots of opportunities for these skills to develop.

We have lots of Toolkit sheets about play – start with [People Play](#) or [Physical Play](#). Look at [Making connections](#) if your child finds playing together difficult.

[Copying](#) and [Turn Taking](#) games can be excellent ways to encourage communication skills to develop.

If you have tried these strategies and you are still concerned, you can refer your child to our service using the referral form on the web site [here](#).

