

Manchester Local Care Organisation

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Advice for Parents and Carers:

Top Tips for Talking

1. Comments, not questions

Talk about what your child is doing

Too many questions can feel like a test. Instead, say what is happening (for example, "Throw the ball"). Your child is more likely to learn and copy you.

2. Speak in your home language

Use your family's main language

Children learn best using the language you speak at home. They can learn English later at nursery or school.

3. Follow your child's lead

Join in with what your child likes

This shows you share their interest. When children enjoy what they are doing, they pay more attention and are happier to communicate.

4. Get your child's attention

Sit facing your child. Say their name before you speak. Talk about things you both can see.

5. Make it easy for them to talk

Dummies can stop children from learning to talk. Take the dummy out during the day. Aim to use the dummy for bedtimes only.

6. Give them time to talk

Children need extra time to understand and then decide what to say. Look at them and wait, so they know you are listening.

7. Make it easy for them to listen

8. Say it again and again

Repeat key words often.

Young children need to hear the same words many times. This helps them understand and learn new words.

9. Use simple language

Use short, clear sentences

Speak slowly and say simple phrases like “Food time now.” This helps your child understand and remember.

10. Don’t worry if they pronounce it wrong

Original wording

Focus what your child says, not how they say it.

Listen to what your child is trying to say. Then say the correct word back. Don’t ask your child to copy you.

11. Have fun together

Play and enjoy time together

Read books, sing songs, do actions, and be silly. This helps children pay attention and learn.

12. Give choices

Ask questions like “Do you want banana or apple?” This helps children practice saying what they want.

13. Build on what they say

Add words to their speech.

If your child says “Bus,” you could reply, “Yes, a big bus.” This helps them learn more words.