



Community Children's
Health Partnership



Understanding and communication

**Top Tips from
Speech & Language Therapy**

Service provided by



Some children find it more difficult than others to develop language skills. Language is complicated and develops from birth.

There can be many reasons why a child might have difficulties understanding and using language. Sometimes these difficulties can run in families, or be part of a wider condition e.g. Autism, Learning Difficulties, Hearing Impairment. Sometimes there is no obvious reason.

Some children have on-going, specific difficulties with speech and/or language, and these can have an impact on their ability to engage with school and interact with others. This could be a Developmental Language Disorder.

Some parts of language can be especially difficult:

- Time concepts e.g. before/ after, weekend
- 'Wh' questions: especially 'why' and 'how'
- Idioms e.g. "pull your socks up" "pull yourself together"
- Narrative e.g. telling a sequence of how something happened



What next?

Some ideas are shown on the next page. If you have concerns about your child's speech and/or language skills, you could:

- Speak to a professional who knows your child e.g. Health Visitor, School SENCo
- Attend a Speech & Language Therapy drop-in session at school (for school age children) or your local Children's Centre (for Early Years children) – see our website for info
- Call the Speech & Language Therapy advice line: Wednesdays 9:00am-12:00pm 07825 016 335



Useful strategies to try at home

Ways to support understanding

Use the child's name to get their attention before talking

Keep instructions as short and simple as possible

Say steps in order
e.g. "put your shoes on, then stand by the door"

Give processing time (count to 20 in your head)

Tell them what you want them to do:
e.g. say "walk" instead of "don't run"

Avoid or explain sarcasm
unless you are sure the child understands it

Use visuals to help with abstract ideas
e.g. time, feelings



Ways to support talking

Model: if children make mistakes, repeat back what they said with the right words, in a positive way
e.g. "yes, its her bag"

Comment on what your child is doing/seeing with simple language
e.g. "you're bouncing on the bed" "look a dog!"

Build on your child's sentences
e.g. "you felt sad because you dropped your ice-cream"

Ask school for a few important words from the class topic and chat about them at home

Talk about the meaning of new words and phrases, and how to use them
e.g. "a tiger is a stripy animal with big teeth and claws, you can say 'the tiger climbed the tree'"

Practice answering questions about story books
e.g. "who made the shoes?" "where did they go on holiday?"
- if your child is not sure, suggest an answer or offer choices

Use 'wh' questions (where, when, who, what) to help your child talk about things that have happened - sometimes drawing or writing out the steps can help

Useful websites for more information:

CCHP – Speech & Language Therapy service in Bristol & South Glos:

www.cchp.nhs.uk/cchp/explore-cchp/childrens-speech-language-therapy

The Communication Trust – has lots of free information & videos for parents:

<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-parents/>

ICAN Talking Point – a resource for parents concerned about their child's speech & language development, with information on Speech & Language development and an interactive 'progress checker'

<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>

Afasic – charity for children & their families with Speech & language difficulties, with lots of free information, videos and activities ideas:

<https://www.afasic.org.uk/>

RADLD have produced a fact sheet about developmental language disorder in a variety of languages

<https://radld.org/about/dld/dld-fact-sheet/>

Advice and Support

For further advice and support from a Speech & Language Therapist, please contact us via our Telephone Advice Line 07825 016 335 (Wednesdays 9am-12pm) or by email sirona.slt@nhs.net





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This service is provided by Sirona care & health
as part of the Community Children's Health Partnership

Let us know what you think and get involved

T: 0300 124 5300*

E: sirona.hello@nhs.net

W: www.cchp.nhs.uk

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