

Creating Opportunities to Talk

It's easy to do things for your child when you know what they want – this can mean they don't need to talk. Creating more opportunities to talk will help them practice and increase their talking.

Offering choices:

- Do you want juice or milk? Do you want to wear a stripy t-shirt or a spotty one?

Encourage asking for more:

- Only give a little bit of something e.g. one piece of apple to encourage them to ask for the rest of it, or open a jar of bubbles, blow the bubbles and then stop. Wait for the child to request more.

Encourage asking for help:

- Make “silly” mistakes. Put on one shoe but not the other. During painting/drawing give them the paper but no paints/crayons. Wait for the child to let you know and say what's missing.
- Put a favourite toy out of their reach but still in sight. Wait for them to request the toy by looking/pointing/vocalising before giving it to them.
- Close the door to the garden/outside area so they need to ask for the door to be opened to play outside.
- Put the child's favourite food or toy in a clear container that they can't open. Put the container in front of them and wait for a request for help.

Wait!!

- Always **allow plenty of time** for your child to communicate before doing something for them.
- Pause at a crucial moment in rough and tumble games e.g. chasing, tickling, swinging round and wait for the child to indicate that they want you to complete the routine.
- Sing action rhymes with the child and pause to allow them to fill in the gaps.

NB: These strategies can be frustrating if your child finds it very hard to request. Don't wait too long to offer help if it is needed – modelling what they could have done is a good way to learn the skill without frustration.

Offer specific praise to help them understand what they did e.g. “good asking!”