

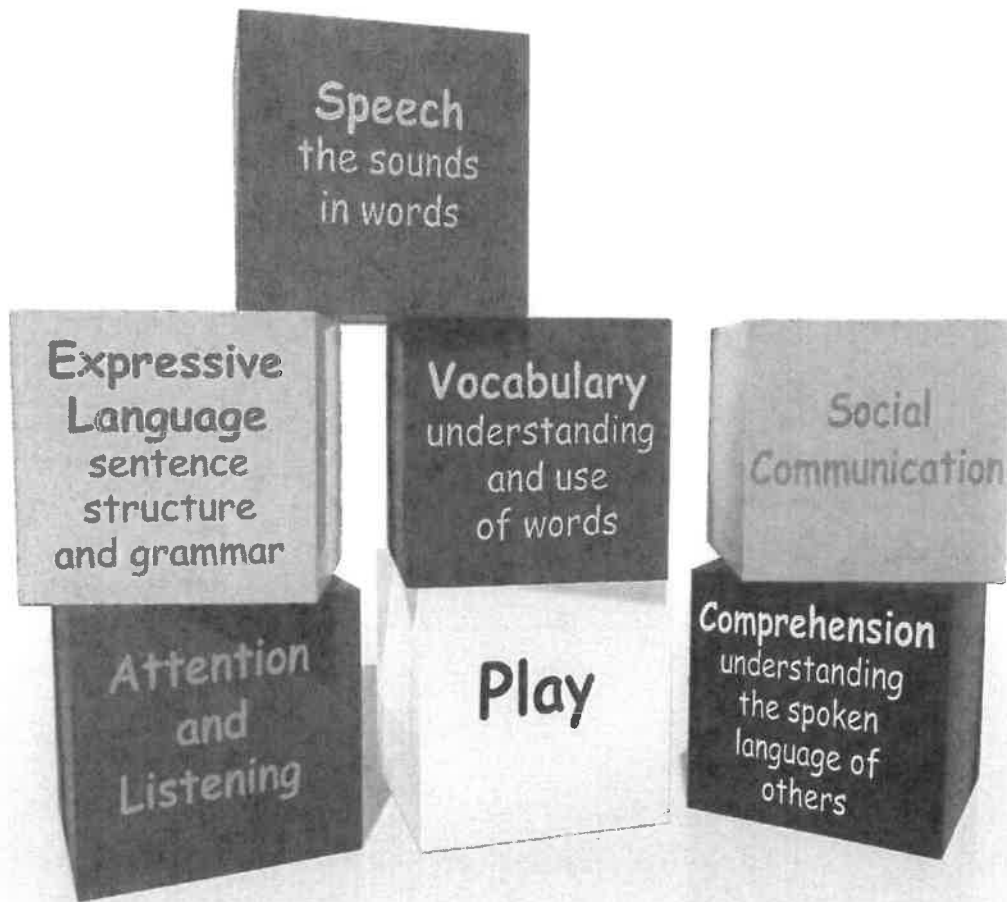
# Speech and Language Resource Pack for Parents

(For Children aged 3 - 4 years)



## The 'Building Blocks' of Language:

The picture below shows the main building blocks of language. A child needs to develop skills in all these areas:



Difficulties can occur with any of the building blocks. This pack has been designed to give advice and simple activities to help your child in each of the language areas. There are also advice sheets related to Stammering and Voice.

## Strategies to develop...

# Attention

### Points to remember

- Minimise distractions and reduce background noise
- Call your child's name and make sure they are looking at you before giving an instruction.
- Teach good listening skills by showing your child what is expected of them i.e. 'this is good sitting, listening, looking, waiting'.

**Chunking** - Break down instructions into chunks your child is able to follow e.g. 'get your coat' (praise your child for listening)

'stand by the door' (point and praise when the instruction is followed)

Follow your child's lead by letting them choose the activity and comment on his/her play rather than asking questions or directing the play.

If your child loses interest in an activity encourage them to return using phrases such as 'one more go'. Use a positive tone of voice and provide plenty of praise when he/she returns to the activity.

**Turn taking** - Encourage turn taking during family activities / games and use phrases such as 'your turn', 'mummy's turn', 'Ellie's turn' etc.

Praise good turn taking / waiting.

**Keep things simple** - it is better to finish a 4-piece puzzle than abandon a 12-piece one.

Encourage your child to finish an activity before moving on, or at least help tidy it up first.

**Here and now** - Talk about what is happening now not later or tomorrow. Keep the language relevant to what your child is doing or playing with.



Activities to develop...

# Attention



## Ready Steady Go Games

Encourage your child to wait for you to say 'go' whilst playing:

- Knocking down a tower
- Pushing a car
- Rolling a ball

e.g. You or your child builds a tower and you say "Ready, steady .... Go!" before he / she knocks it down

## Stop and Go Games

❖ Musical statues - Encourage your child to dance whilst you play music and to stop and stay still when the music stops

❖ Instruments - you and your child each have a musical instrument (or noisy object). You say "go" and you both play your musical instruments. You say "stop" and you and your child stop.

*\*Make it easier - add a gesture - hold up hand for 'stop'*

*\*Make it harder - you say stop but continue to play your instrument to see if your child is listening to your words or copying your actions.*

## Shopping

You will need: 10 items from around the house e.g. food, toys, clothes

Give your child a shopping basket/bag and tell them you are going to play shops.

Ask them to fetch 2 items from the shop.

*\*Make it easier - fetch 1 item*

*\*Make it harder - fetch 3 items*

## Outside listening

Give your child different instructions when out in the garden or park e.g.

e.g. Touch the tree and the fence

Turn around and touch your nose

*\*Make it easier - (touch the tree) - give just one instruction*

*\*Make it harder - (shake your head, then touch the tree and the fence) - give three instructions*

Activities to develop...

# Attention 2

## Match the animal to the sound

You will need: toy animals or animal pictures

Put several animals out.

You make the animal noise and encourage your child to find the matching animal.

\* Make it easier: use only 2 animals at a time

\* Make it harder: ask your child to remember 2 or more sounds e.g. Find moo ... baa

## Nursery Rhymes

Sing your child's favourite Nursery Rhymes and encourage them to join in.

Once your child knows the rhymes leave gaps for them to fill in e.g.

Hickory Dickory Dock  
The mouse ran up the \_\_\_\_\_  
The clock struck one  
The mouse ran down  
Hickory dickory \_\_\_\_\_

## What's that sound?

You will need: Noisy items (e.g. Spoon + cup, crisp packet, keys, saucepan)  
: A barrier (e.g. Large book, sheet)

Introduce the items to your child and show them what noise each one makes e.g.  
Rattle spoon in a cup, bang a saucepan.

Hide the items behind your barrier or ask your child to close their eyes.  
Make one sound then ask your child to point to the item that made the sound.



## Strategies to develop...

# Play



### Points to remember

- Observe your child at play
- Wait before joining in
- Comment on your child's play
- Model new play ideas

## Imaginative and pretend play

• Observe what your child is doing in play - what do they choose to play with and how do they play with it?

• Find a similar toy and play with it alongside your child.

• Model new ideas for your child to copy e.g. feeding teddy

• Introduce new toys and show your child how to play with them. Ensure these toys are readily available for your child to play with.

Use short phrases to comment on what your child is doing in play and copy his/her play ideas.

## Social play

• Play alongside your child, commenting on what you are doing.

• Encourage him/her to tolerate playing alongside other children (with adult support as needed).

• Provide praise/rewards for positive interaction with adults and other children such as looking at you or sharing a toy.

• Once your child is happy to play alongside others, begin to involve them in his/her play, supporting them to share toys and take turns. Try to include a child who has good play and turn-taking skills so that he/she gets a good peer model.

• Gradually reduce the amount of adult support as he/she becomes more confident in social play.

Use games that require turn-taking e.g. fishing, skittles, lottos



Activities to develop...

# Play



## Make believe play

You will need: brushes, dressing up clothes, tea set, play food

- Pretend to have a drink and then encourage your child to do the same
- Brush your child's hair and let them brush yours!
- Pretend to eat from a bowl and then encourage your child to do the same
- Pretend to go shopping and then encourage your child to do the same

## Large doll play

You will need: doll or teddy and clothes

- Pretend to dress them, feed them, wash them and encourage your child to do the same
- Make a pretend bed for dolly and encourage your child to do the same
- Take dolly for a walk in a toy pushchair with your child

## Understanding miniature objects

Show your child how to play with a real object before playing with the miniature one e.g. Use a real brush to brush your child's hair and doll's hair before encouraging them to try the miniature brush.

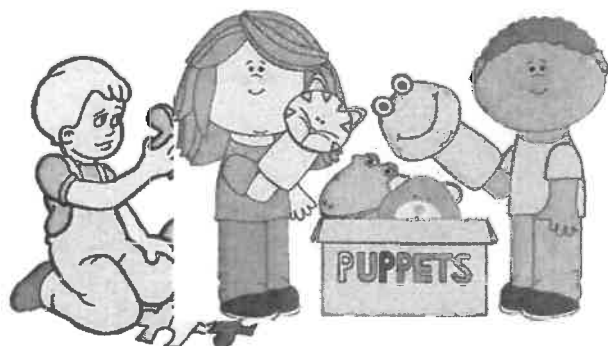
Play matching games - encourage your child to match miniature objects to their real life object e.g. "here is a tiny chair" and then "here is your chair"

## Miniature toy play

You will need: miniature dolls, farm animals, house (or box) cars etc.

Act out scenarios with your child e.g. Going to the zoo, driving cars, bedtime in the dolls house.

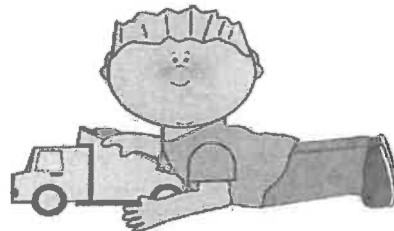
Comment on what you and your child are doing in play and give examples of what the people may say e.g. 'I'm going to the shops'





Strategies to develop...

# Comprehension



## Points to remember

- Minimise distractions and reduce background noise
- Call your child's name and make sure they are looking at you before giving an instruction.
- Teach good listening skills by showing your child what is expected of them i.e. 'this is good sitting, listening, looking, waiting'.

**Chunking** - Break down instructions into small manageable chunks e.g. instead of 'put your toys in the box then go and wash your hands' try 'toys in the box' (show them if they seem unsure) and then 'wash your hands'

Avoid asking too many questions which children often find difficult to answer.

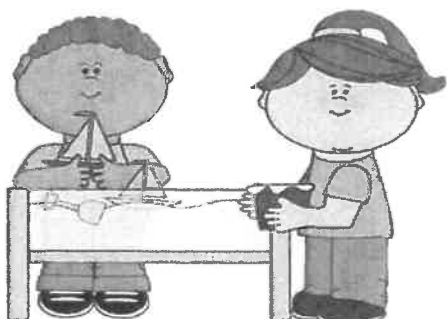
Expand on your child's understanding by adding one new word/concept at a time.  
e.g. In play:  
Find dog  
Find a **brown** dog

**Repeat** - Repeat an instruction if your child does not understand.

If there is still no response make the instruction easier.

**Visual support** - Use gestures wherever possible to reinforce your instruction or question e.g. Pointing, facial expression, nodding/shaking head, simple mime.

Use simple language and vocabulary



**Here and now** - Talk about what is happening now not later or tomorrow. Keep the language relevant to what your child is doing or playing with.



Activities to develop...

# Comprehension

## Simon Says

Play Simon Says asking your child to follow short instructions e.g. Touch your nose, jump, sit down.

*\*Make it easier - show your child what to do*

*\*Make it harder - ask them to do two or three things at once e.g. Touch the chair then stand on one leg.*

## What am I?

You need: 10 pictures or objects

Put 2/3 in front of your child and ask them to find the one you describe e.g. Find the one you kick, find the one you eat, find the one that's red / big / soft.

*\*Make it easier - give them an extra clue*

*\*Make it harder - Place more options in front of your child*

## Tidy Up Time!

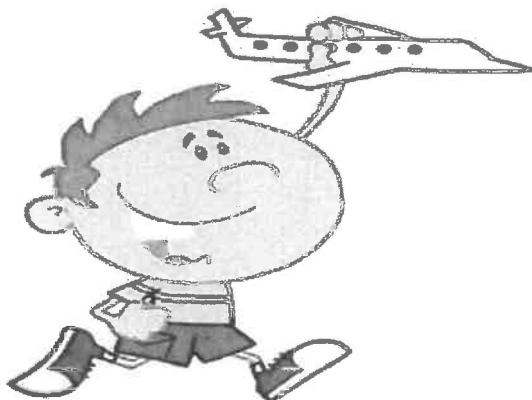
When tidying up ask your child to listen and put certain items where you say e.g.

Easy - Put the book on the shelf

Put the big teddy in the box

Put the blue car in the big box

↓ Hard - Put the car in the box and the pen on the table



Activities to develop...

## Comprehension 2

### Story time

When looking at books with your child ask them to find things you name e.g.  
Find....

teddy / cat / car / house  
teddy's nose / boy's feet / the man swimming  
the big ball / the blue car / the train's wheels  
the cat and the mouse

### Shopping

You will need: 10 items from around the house e.g. food, toys, clothes

Give your child a shopping basket/bag and tell them you are going to play shops.

Ask them to fetch 2 items from the shop.

*\*Make it easier - fetch 1 item*

*\*Make it harder - fetch 3 items*

### Picnic

You will need - teddy and doll ( or 2 favourite toys) and play or real food

Give your child instructions:

'Give the apple to dolly'

'Give the cake to teddy'

*\*Make it easier - use only one soft toy*

*\*Make it harder - ask you child to give two food items to each soft toy*



### Where am I? (position words)

You will need about 10 toys.

Hide the toys around the room then encourage your child to listen and find the one you have hidden.

e.g. "Find the toy that's under the cushion / on the chair / next to the tv / in the bag"

## Strategies to develop...

# Vocabulary



### Points to remember

- Minimise distractions and reduce background noise
- Match your language to your child's focus of attention

Introduce new words / vocabulary when looking at books and when out and about e.g. At the seaside, zoo etc. Don't forget action words

Name the objects that your child is interested in i.e. playing with/looking at.

**Repeat** - Repeat the new word several times in different situations e.g. 'wet' - 'your hair is wet', 'wet dog', 'it's wet outside'

**Make it practical** - When teaching action words encourage your child to do the action as you name it e.g. 'Simon says' game

**Multi-sensory** - Allow opportunities for your child to hear the word, see the object, feel the texture, use the object, smell and taste it where possible.

**Syllable clapping** - Encourage your child to clap out how many syllables (beats) are in the word. If they struggle provide a model and encourage them to copy you.

**Sorting / Categorising** - Encourage your child to identify what you do with the object, where you find it and what category it belongs to wherever possible e.a. Food, animals, toys.



Use real objects where possible. It's easier to learn vocabulary using real objects

Practise vocabulary linked to the class topic (please ask your child's teacher for a list of vocabulary).

Activities to develop...

# Vocabulary



## What's in the bag?

You will need: a bag and a selection of toys/objects

Take turns with your child to find things in the bag and name them, talk about what you do with it, Demonstrate how you use it.

*\*Make it harder: Encourage your child to guess what you have found by giving them clues e.g. We eat it, it's yellow...*

## What's teddy doing?

You will need: a teddy/doll/puppet

Ask your child to make teddy do different actions e.g. Sleep, walk, run, jump, fall, climb etc.

Take turns and encourage your child to tell you what to do with teddy or what teddy is doing.

## Hide and seek

You will need: a range of everyday objects

Hide the objects around the house/room and ask your child to find the one you say. E.g. "Find the monkey / keys / book."

*\*Make it harder: Ask your child to find the objects that you describe e.g. Find something you read, find something you kick*

## Story time

When looking at books with your child ask them to find things you name e.g. Find....

teddy / cat / car / house / dog / ball / swimming / flying / running

Take turns with your child and encourage them to ask you to find things in the pictures.

## Strategies to develop...

# Expressive Language

### Points to remember


- Minimise distractions and reduce background noise
- Follow your child's lead. Let them talk about something they are interested in.
- Repeat what your child has said to show that he/she has been understood.
- Encourage and respond to the use of gestures

**Comment** on what your child is doing/playing with using 3-4 words at a time. If you comment on something a child is interested in then they are more likely to want to communicate with you.

Follow your child's lead by letting them choose the activity and comment on his/her play rather than asking questions or directing the play.

Allow opportunities and create reasons for your child to communicate e.g. when playing a jigsaw hide one piece, this provides an opportunity for your child to communicate 'where's the tractor?' / 'no tractor' etc.

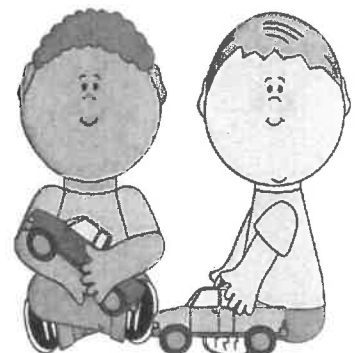
**Expand** on what your child has said i.e. if your child says 'I'm building a car' repeat what your child said but add an extra word 'Wow! You're building a blue car'.

**Reduce questions** - If a child is shy or has limited language asking questions can make them feel pressurised and make them less willing to communicate. If asking questions avoid closed questions. Try using open questions e.g. instead of 'did you eat your lunch?' try 'tell me what you had for lunch' 

If your child is confident in speaking allow them to be the teacher and encourage him/her to tell you what to do / what to find etc.



**Recast** - If your child has made a mistake repeat what they have said using the correct grammar e.g.  
Child: she play sand  
Adult: yes she's playing in the sand  
Slightly emphasise the word you want your child to hear





Activities to develop...

# Expressive Language

These strategies can be used to support the development of expressive language in the following activities:

- Follow your child's lead, e.g. Allow them to pick the book or puzzle.
- Comment on their play using simple phrases and allow plenty of time for your child to talk
- Repeat back what they say correctly, e.g. Child: "The monkey falled"  
Adult: "That's right, the monkey fell"
- Add one or two extra words, e.g. Child: "a house!" Adult: "Yes, a red house"

## Quiet time activities (reading, puzzles)

Child: boy falled

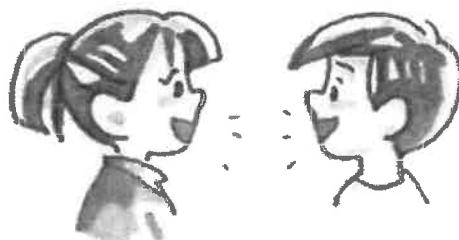
Adult: that's right, the boy fell over

## Creative Activities (painting, drawing, playdough, water play)

### Example: painting a picture

Child: look mummy, tree

Adult: yes a big tree



Activities to develop...

## Expressive Language 2

### Imaginative Play

(dolls house, farmyard, lego, cars, tea party)

Example: child playing with farm animals

Child: silently puts a pig in a shed

Adult: oh pig's in the shed!

Child: continues putting animals in the shed

Adult: oh they're all in the shed!

the animals are sleeping

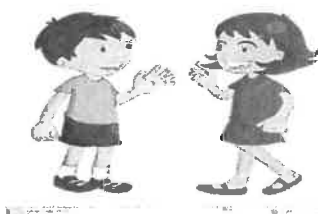
### Daily Routines

(bathtime, getting dressed, dinnertime, in the car)

Example: in the car

Child: look lorry!

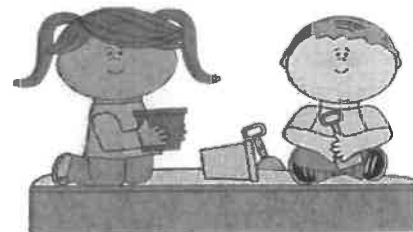
Adult: yes a big lorry, lorry's going fast!





## Strategies to support...

# Speech



### Points to remember

- Minimise distractions and reduce background noise
- Teach good listening skills. Children need to be able to focus on sounds in the environment around them before concentrating on speech sounds.
- Children at this age typically make some speech sound errors

**Respond** to what your child has said to show that you understand. Do not pretend to understand instead encourage your child to show you what they mean. Be positive and reassuring and repeat back what you've understood e.g. 'your dog...?'.

Play with sounds in front of a mirror, using sounds that are visible e.g. 'oo', 'ee', 'aa', 'p', 'b', 'm', 'f'

Encourage your child to listen to noises and try to reproduce these e.g.

Drum - d d d d

Plug noises - glug glug

Rain/dripping - t t t t

Quiet - sh

Bouncy ball - b b b b



\*Do not worry if your child is not able to make some sounds

If they have difficulty with a specific sound e.g. 'k' give them lots of opportunities to hear words beginning with 'k' e.g. 'car', 'driving the car', 'wheels on the car'.

**\*Do not make your child repeat the word.**

Play games that allow lots of repetition of single words and sounds e.g. snap, pairs, lotto etc.

**Sing** lots of nursery rhymes with repetitive words so that your child can hear the same words over and over.

Allow plenty of opportunities for him/her to join in and give lots of praise even if the target word is not said correctly.

Look at books together and name pictures using only single words.

Do not correct your child, instead provide a good model e.g. if your child says 'tat' for cat, repeat the word accurately 'yes that's a...cat'.

Place a slight emphasis on the target sound but do not draw attention to it. **Do not make your child repeat the word.**

Activities to support...

# Speech



## Find the sound

You will need: objects that make a sound e.g. Ticking clock, musical box, phone

Hide the item and encourage your child to listen to the sound and find the toy

## Action game

You will need 2/3 different noisy toys to represent actions e.g.  
drum = jump, bell = run

Tell your child that the drum means you have to jump and the bell means you have to run

Encourage them to listen to the sound and do the matching action

## Identify sounds

You will need toys to represent noises e.g. animals, baby, transport toys, clock, phone etc.

Place several toys in front of your child. Make a sound and get your child to choose the toy that matches e.g. neee noo - fire engine

Take turns with your child so that they get opportunities to make the sounds.

## Musical instruments

You will need: two sets of musical instruments / homemade noisemakers

Matching: match two noisemakers that make the same sound.

Copying sounds: adult makes a sound and encourages the child to copy. The sounds can be quiet/loud/long/short

Copy a beat: You tap out/clap a short beat and encourage your child to copy it

Strategies to support...

# Social Communication



## Points to remember

- Minimise distractions and reduce background noise
- Use visual cue cards to help explain what is expected e.g. Wash hands
- Call your child's name before giving an instruction, he/she might not know you are talking to him/her.

Tell them what they can do rather than what they can't i.e. instead of saying 'don't run' use 'walk!'.



If your child is upset, you may need to talk less, too much language might make things worse when they are upset

**Turn-taking** - Encourage him/her to wait a turn by using visual supports e.g. use the sign or a cue card for 'wait' so that they know their turn is coming. Don't make them wait too long the first time you do this.

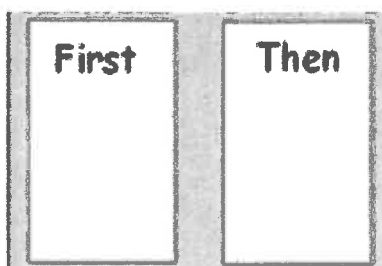
**Name** your child's emotion as it is experienced e.g. 'James is sad' when they are feeling sad. Use visual supports to reinforce the language i.e. show them a symbol/picture that represents sad. This will help link the meaning of the word to that feeling and picture.

**Match** the language you use to their focus of attention - Comment on what they are looking at.

For a child who struggles to follow a routine, use a 'first and then' board:- take pictures of your child at different activities or use pictures/symbols. Place the picture of what your child is asked to do under 'first' and a picture of the next activity under 'then'. To begin with, make sure the second activity is a preferred one.

For a child who has difficulty finishing an activity, count them down e.g. a 2 minute, 1 minute, 30 second, 15 second warning and then counting down from 15 seconds before moving to the next activity. Or use sand timers, then use a 'stop' or 'finish' sign.

Be VISUAL!!!



If your child has difficulty understanding what will happen next, give them an object related to the next activity before taking them to that activity.

Activities to develop...

# Social Communication



## Eye-Contact

### Activity 1: Binoculars and telescopes

You will need: A box, tubes / pipes e.g. old kitchen rolls, wrapping paper tubes.

Make a number of different 'binoculars' and 'telescopes' from the old tubes (different sizes and shapes). Put the 'binoculars' and 'telescopes' into the box. Allow your child to choose one. Encourage your child to look through the item. Make eye contact with your child by looking through the other end of the item. You can say 'peepo' when you make eye contact.

### Activity 2: Peepo

You will need: A sheet or blanket

Hold the sheet up in front of your face so your child can't see you. Wait a few seconds. Then pull the sheet away, make eye contact with your child and say 'peepo!'. (Ensure you make eye contact with your child before saying 'peepo'). Repeat.

If your child is able to use the sheet for him/herself take turns with your child to hold the sheet. If your child doesn't remove the sheet from in front of his/her face you could put your head round the sheet to make eye contact.

## Understanding Emotions

### Activity 1: Craft

You will need: junk materials such as strings, buttons, paper plates.

Make sad and happy faces from the materials with your child. Talk about why each face looks happy / sad e.g. 'This one's happy because he's smiling'.

### Activity 2: Books / Pictures

You will need: Books / Photos / Pictures

Look at the pictures with your child and label the emotions for them e.g. 'He's sad..look he's crying' / 'That man looks cross'. Encourage your child to find someone that looks happy / sad / cross etc.



Activities to develop...

# Social Communication 2

## Turn-Taking

### Activity 1: Passing a Ball

You will need: Ball, 2 Adults

The two adults should sit opposite each other with some distance between them. Encourage your child to sit between the legs of one adult. This adult will become the facilitator. Roll the ball between your child and the opposite adult. Initially your child may need help to roll the ball back and forth. This help should be reduced until your child is able to take turns rolling the ball independently and the facilitator can move away.

### Activity 2: Building a tower

You will need: Blocks

Split the blocks into two piles. Place one pile in front of your child and label it as your child's by using their name e.g. 'Ben's'. Place the other pile in front of the adult and label it as the adult's by using their name e.g. 'Mummy's'. Encourage your child to put a block on the tower saying 'Ben's turn'. Next say 'Mummy's turn' and the adult places a block on the tower. Continue.

## Pointing

### Activity 1: Sharing a book

You will need: A Book

**Part 1 (Respond to pointing):** Encourage your child to look at a book with you. As you go through the book, point at the objects/people in it and name them. Make sure that your child is looking at the book while you do this so that he/she see you pointing and what you're pointing at. Exaggerate the pointing gesture.

**Part 2 (Use pointing):** Facilitate pointing. Encourage your child to look at a book with you. As you go through the book move their hand to point at the different pictures and name them for him/her. Make sure your child is looking at the book.

Encourage pointing. As you go through the book encourage your child to point to the pictures as you name them. If your child does not point go back to the previous step.

Strategies to support...

# Stammering



## Points to remember

- Listen to what your child says rather than how they say it. Many children are unaware that they stammer so try not to draw attention to it.
- If your child is aware that they are stammering then you can acknowledge and talk about their difficulties using child-friendly terminology, e.g. 'bumpy talking'. Be encouraging and reassuring.
- Create 5 minutes of one to one 'Special Time' every day with your child e.g. Playing a game, reading a book, having a chat

**Be interested** - Show that you are interested in what your child is saying by making eye-contact, listening carefully and acknowledging what they say. Don't finish their sentence for them.

During busy family times, make sure everyone has a chance to talk and be listened to. This will stop your child rushing to get their point across.

Don't ask your child to slow down or start their sentence again. Keep your own speech slow and even and your child will reflect this way of talking.

**Match** your language level to that of your child's. Use short simple sentences and pause between them.

**Self-esteem** - Build on your child's self-esteem by giving specific praise for all the things they can do well, e.g. 'thank you for tidying up the toys, you're very good at helping tidy up'.

Questions can place extra pressure on your child and affect their stammer. When you ask a question give your child plenty of time to respond. Avoid unnecessary questions that you already know the answer to e.g. 'what's this?' or 'what colour is this?'



Strategies to support...

# Voice



## Points to remember

- Reduce background noise so that he/she does not need to raise their voice e.g. Turn the telly off at dinnertime
- Allow your child to have a water bottle at all times and encourage them to sip it frequently especially after running around as he/she will have been breathing through the mouth.

**Encourage** your child to have a break from talking, e.g. A quiet time looking at a book or doing a puzzle

Use soft voice for some characters when reading stories so that your child hears models of quiet voice.

It is most effective if this character is the main one that your child will identify with.

**Encourage** your child not to shout during play.



Use a gentle or soft voice when talking to your child and encourage him/her to do the same (do not encourage your child to whisper as this places more strain on the vocal cords).

If your child frequently clears their throat encourage him/her to use a single cough instead.



Use a reward system where appropriate to reinforce the above strategies



## Resources for Parents:

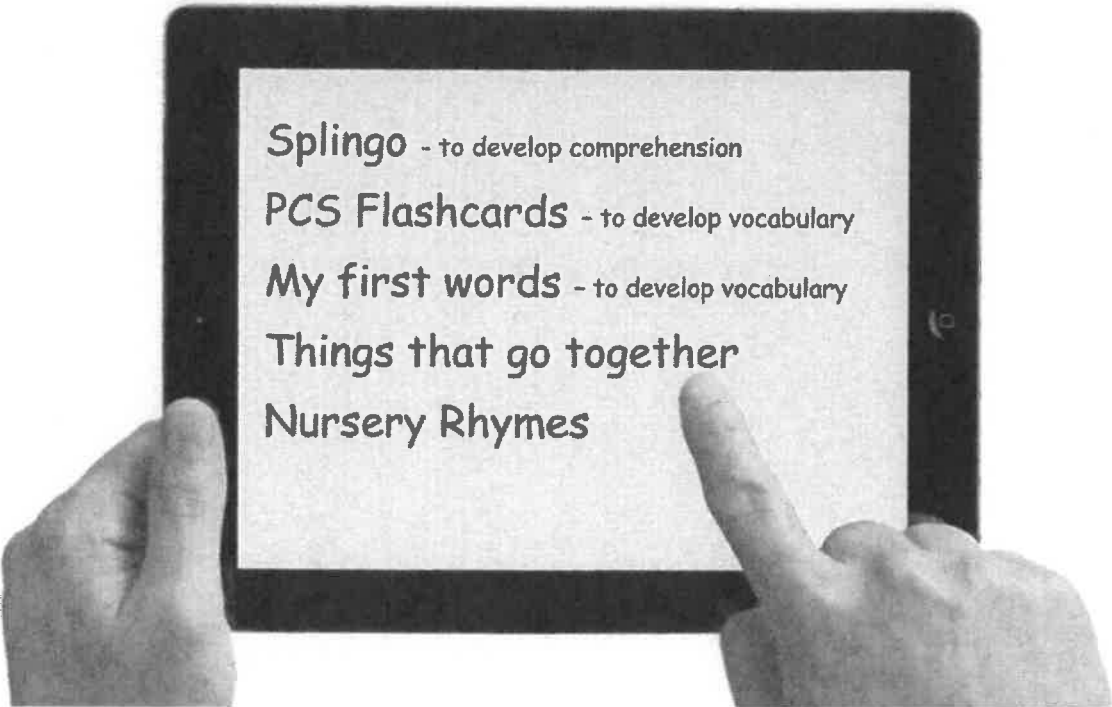
Useful websites for further information on Speech and Language:



A black and white photograph of a computer setup on a desk. A monitor is centered, displaying a list of websites. In front of the monitor is a keyboard, and to the right is a mouse. The background is a plain wall.

[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)  
[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)  
[www.afasic.org.uk](http://www.afasic.org.uk)  
[www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk)  
[www.stammering.org](http://www.stammering.org)  
[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

Useful apps to use with your child:



A black and white photograph of a hand holding a tablet. The tablet screen displays a list of apps. Another hand is pointing at the screen. The background is a plain wall.

**Splingo** - to develop comprehension  
**PCS Flashcards** - to develop vocabulary  
**My first words** - to develop vocabulary  
**Things that go together**  
**Nursery Rhymes**