



TOP TIPS FOR EARLY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Elklan Training run courses delivered by speech and language therapists and specialist teachers. We want to share some simple techniques and tips that we have recommended over the years that you can use at home with children to develop their language and communication skills. These techniques can be used every day and really work! We hope you find them useful.

Tips to encourage children to play and talk



- Turn off all distractions that you can, e.g. TV, Tablets, Phones, Radio etc. This will help you listen and tune into to what your child is saying and help them to engage with you.
- Try to be face to face with your child. They need to be able to see that you are talking to them
- Sit back and see what takes your child's interest. This will be what they will want to talk about.
- Follow your child's lead as they are more likely to play with and talk about things that interest them.
- Join in with their play, even if this involve doing the same thing over and over again. This will let your child know that you are attending and listening to them and will help to develop early imitation and turn taking skills.

- Name objects of interest and actions that your child makes. This will help your child to link a word to these objects and actions and use these in speech later on.
- Comment on what you see. Avoid asking too many questions. This puts pressure on the child to speak and they may not understand these questions or have the language to answer.
- Repeat back what the child says and say the words that your child might be trying to say by interpreting their behaviour. E.g. if your child points to their cup say “*more juice?*”

Tips to help children understand



- Repeat a word several times during play or an activity. Typically developing children need to hear a word many times before they learn it and for children with speech and language difficulties this will be much more.
- Keep language clear and simple and use a steady rate of speech. Children can easily become overwhelmed if they hear too much talking, if the talking is very fast or if the words are too difficult for them to understand.
- Help children understand key words by showing them what you are talking about. Hold objects up near to your face so that your child is more likely to look. Use gestures, facial expressions and stress in your voice to keep your child's interest.
- Use daily activities to talk about words and comment on what you are doing. For example, when putting the shopping away or getting ready in the morning.
- Use pictures, photos, body language and items in our environment to help children understand spoken words. Children are often able to understand what we say when we do this.

Tips for speech and sentence development



- Model correct speech sounds and words to your child. Repeat what your child has said using the correct words and sounds rather than making them say it again. With time they will be able to do it themselves but first they need to hear a good model from you.
- Encourage your child to show you what they want or mean. They can use also use gestures and pictures to help you understand. This will reduce frustration and help you to better understand their needs and wants.
- Expand on your child's speech by adding another word to what they have said. If your child says 'milk' you can say 'more milk' or 'drink milk' to add more information.
- Model back sentences to your child if they have missed out or used the wrong grammar words. This will help them to hear the correct word and use these later. If your child says 'I goed shops', you can say 'yes, you **went** to the shops'. We emphasize the word that we want them to notice.
- Acknowledge what your child has said rather than the clarity of their speech or sentences. It is important that the child feels that what they have said has been listened to and valued. This will help boost their self-esteem and confidence to communicate.

If you would like to find out more about our e-learning opportunities please visit our website at <https://www.elklan.co.uk/information/practitioners/e-learning-opportunities> for a range of interactive courses to suit all ages, with or without accreditation.

For more information or advice about any of our courses or resources, please contact Clare on clare@elklan.co.uk or ring us on 01208 84145