

Top Talking Tips Activity Wallchart

- If you have read the accompanying 'Top Talking Tips' booklet you'll see that everything you are doing to support children and parents/carers almost certainly has a link to speech, language and communication development.
- If you have parents/carers present during sessions (e.g. play and learn groups) your job as a group or session leader is often about reassurance and modelling good ideas and good practice, and there are lots of ideas here to help with that.
- It's likely you are doing a lot of these things already, but please use this wallchart as a prompt, and a fun reminder for you and your team.

Where we have mentioned specific resources from other organisations, please scan the QR code at the bottom of the wallchart.

Be a Role Model

Encourage parents to play with their child as much as possible, commenting on what they're doing. You could suggest 'talk/play' time at home - five minutes of dedicated time to talk and play with your child every day without distractions such as screens (this could be linked to bedtime routine).

Make sure you respond to the children when busy talking to a parent/carer.

Model language - name objects and actions, make signs and gestures to help children understand, keeping questions to a minimum and making sure the child has time to respond.



Get Messy

Sensory and messy play is great for speech, language and communication development as it provides endless opportunities for turn-taking, serve-and-return interaction and building vocabulary:

Builders' trays are perfect for introducing sensory and messy play into a group. They are cheap, easily available and accessible to all, either on the floor or using a table or a stand. Shower curtains are perfect as a washable and cheap play mat for messy play.

Play dough is easy and cheap to make - here's Ludmila's recipe (Ludmila is one of Start Bradford's Neighbourhood Workers who supports lots of groups in Bradford and makes brilliant play dough!)

Mix 8 tablespoons of plain flour with 2 tablespoons of salt in a bowl.
In a separate bowl mix 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, some drops of water-based child's paint* and 60ml of lukewarm water.

Mix everything together well and knead the dough. Add more water if needed until it feels very soft. *You can use food colouring but paint gives a more intense colour.



Use descriptive words while playing e.g. 'sticky', 'cold', 'wet', 'dirty', 'slimy', 'stretchy'.

Say 'my turn', 'your turn'.

Sing Sing Sing!



Sing anything and everything! Neither you, nor parents/carers, need to be amazing singers or be able to hold a tune to help a child get benefits from rhymes and songs:

Teach a new rhyme or song and practice it over a few sessions (Bradford Libraries' annual 'Rhyme Challenge' could help with this).

Get parents used to hearing made-up songs about things.

Signpost to songs and rhymes on YouTube - for example 'tidy up time' and 'wash our hands' songs.

Hand out song sheets to encourage parents/carers to try singing at home.

Go Treasure Hunting



Treasure baskets are an easy way to introduce loose parts play to toddlers and younger children ('loose parts' is the label given to any collection of natural or man-made materials that can be used to expand upon children's play. They can be moved, arranged, designed, taken apart and more!)

Children don't need fancy and expensive toys, in fact they often get more benefit from using natural resources and their imagination. This is called 'heuristic play' - to discover through trial and error - and is a fun way of developing imaginative and creative play. (Heuristic play is often used in nurseries and early years settings to promote independent thinking and playing, but in a toddler group session it is more about playing and modelling some new words):

Offer a baby or a young child a basket or a box of objects to explore, for instance natural items gathered on a walk or a group of metal or wooden objects (see 50 Things to do Before You're Five #3 - Treasure Time).

In a group with parents/carers present, it is good to model how you can follow a child's lead, copying any sounds or words they use, and naming objects.

Make Music



Music has so many benefits, including helping with turn-taking, listening and attentiveness. You don't need musical instruments - you can make your own or just use everyday objects to make noises such as a pan and wooden spoon as a drum, and a lidded box with objects in as a shaker:

Encourage children to copy very simple rhythms - this is great for serve-and-return interactions mentioned in the accompanying booklet.

Sing rhymes and songs using a 'magic bag' (a bag containing images or objects relating to well-known nursery rhymes that you pick out one at a time). This can be used as a regular activity as a way of introducing new words too.

Use words like 'fast', 'slow', 'loud', 'quiet', 'stop'. Simple things like asking children to copy rhythms are great for serve-and-return interactions mentioned in the accompanying booklet.

Games like 'Simon Says'* are a perfect attention and listening activity, and as children become more confident they can become 'Simon'. *Change the name to the group leader's name.

The Magic Bag Song is used by speech and language workers everywhere.



Here is a video of BHT Early Education and Training singing the song. Why don't you try it in your group?

Blow Bubbles

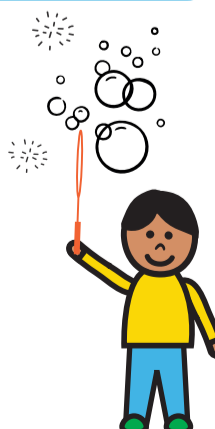
Most children LOVE playing with bubbles. They are magic, they shimmer, they shine AND they disappear! You don't need expensive bubble machines though - a cheap bubble wand is a perfect way to practice turn-taking, attentiveness and to introduce new words.

Blowing bubbles with a wand is a brilliant mouth exercise linked with creating speech sounds - it even can strengthen core stomach muscles if done regularly.

Try introducing new words and even choices when blowing bubbles:

'Whose turn is it?' - 'my turn' 'your turn'
'Shall we blow the bubbles high? Or low?'

'Look - big bubbles', 'look - lots of bubbles'.



Share Stories

Sharing books and stories are perfect ways to support early speech, language and communication:

Children enjoy having the same story again and again so don't worry if you don't have many books to hand, and you can always borrow from the library.

Did you know you can borrow a Story Sack from Bradford Libraries? These include lots of props to make storytelling exciting.

Link a book or story to the activities you are offering in a session as is a great way to bring it to life and help build children's excitement about it.



If you have parents/carers present, demonstrate/model reading a book within your group, showing how you can look at pictures and comment. Be animated and excited about the book - you don't need to read every word of the book to make reading a book exciting!

Ignite Imaginations



Imaginative play, such as dressing-up, provides numerous speech, language and communication development opportunities:

Have a simple dressing up box in your setting so children can start practicing putting clothes on and learning words like 'coat', 'hat', 'gloves' (you don't need 'proper' fancy dress costumes, a box of hats works just as well!)

With older children, start introducing things like size, colour, prepositions: 'in front', 'behind', 'under', 'look - a red hat!' 'look the gloves are on the table' 'put on the long scarf'.

Play hide and seek with objects as another fun way of introducing new words. You could take it in turns to hide a favourite toy and use words to help find it again: 'it's under the chair'.

