

Speaking & Listening: A short guide for parents

Your child: Speaking & listening

It is important to help your child with speaking & listening because:

- Your child's ability to speak and listen well will be a good foundation for their future learning
- If they are good speakers and listeners, they will do better at reading and writing.
- If they can communicate well with others, it will help them to make friends more easily.
- They will become more independent and be able to learn about the world.
- Your child will learn to express their feelings and not become frustrated so easily.

At school, younger children will learn to:

- Think about what they say and choose the right words.
- Speak fluently and confidently
- Listen to instructions from the teacher
- Listen to their classmates before speaking and take turns.

As they get older, they will:

- Join in group discussions and make useful points
- Present to an audience, expressing their opinions clearly
- Take part in decision making and debate
- Learn how language varies in different situations

Put listening to your child first:

- Show your child how to be a good listener by listening to them and others
- Be patient: don't interrupt or finish their sentences for them
- Give your child your attention: don't check your mobile phone at the same time as they are talking to you.
- Show you're listening; ask questions about what they say, ask their opinions.
- Listen to your child reading aloud every day.

Be a clear speaker:

- Speak confidently, using the right words and set an example by speaking in full sentences.
- If English is not your first language, the most important thing is that you speak your own language confidently and well.
- Use clear, simple directions for tasks and behaviours.
- When your child follows directions, show you notice: praise them for listening to you.

Get involved every day:

- Discuss their day with them when you see them after school.
- Try to have a family meal together as often as possible.
- Encourage your child to talk about their views and interests with others.
- Ask them about their homework and get involved with it.
- Switch off the television and computers well before bedtime: chat or read a bedtime story together instead.

Have fun speaking & listening together

- Play family games together, like 'I spy', 'Charades', 'Chinese Whispers'
- Nursery Rhymes, songs, jokes and puppets are an important way of helping younger children learn language
- Retell familiar stories and have fun making up your own.
- With older children, read books and poetry aloud together
- Talk about issues in the news.

Look at these websites for more ideas

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/songs

www.literacytrust.org.uk

www.britishcouncil.org

www.talkingpoint.org.uk