

Top tips to get your child communicating with confidence

Print this page out and put it on the fridge where everyone can see it!

Make time to play with your child

Spend at least 15 minutes every day just playing with your child. Don't try to check your emails at the same time!

Follow your child's focus of attention

Your child will love you for this.

Be face-to-face with your child

It is much easier to communicate when you can see each other's face.

Listen with your eyes and ears

Your child might use gestures, eye contact or even behaviour to communicate with you. You need your eyes to "hear" these messages.

Give your child time to communicate

Be patient, your child needs time to think about what they want to say.

Minimise distractions

Turn off the TV, computer, and radio – you don't need them!

Offer your child choices

This makes it easier for them to communicate and gives you a chance to hear the words they are learning. "Do you want an apple or a pear?"

Show your child what you are talking about

If they don't understand, show them. Don't waste your time repeating instructions 10 times over – your child will tune out if you do this.

Comment on what your child is doing

This lets them know that you are interested in what they are doing and gives them an opportunity to learn new vocabulary.

STOP asking questions

Would you like it if someone kept asking you questions that you knew the answer to?

Reduce on-demand speech

Instead of saying something like, "say cookie or you can't have one", try modelling the word three times. For example, "Cookie. You would like a cookie. Yummy cookie!"

Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Last reviewed October 2020.