

Developing Talking Skills - 18 months plus

Once your child has begun to use some single words, there are many ways that you can help them to develop their skills at putting word's together to make short phrases and sentences. Please note that your child will need to have a good understanding of a range of words before they are able to use them so visit www.letsstarttotalk.co.uk to find activities to develop their understanding.

Below are a range of strategies and activities to help:

- **Match + 1**

Match + 1 is a very simple strategy to help develop sentences. Simply match what your child says and add another word to it. For example:

Child: "Car" Adult: "Yes fast car"

Child: "Big monkey" Adult: "Well done, big fluffy monkey"

Child: "mummy drinking" Adult: "Yes mummy's drinking juice"

Try to not stick to the same words that you add (e.g. colours) try to add a range of words to develop your child's word knowledge.

- **Doing words (verbs)**

Try to develop your child's understanding of doing words (e.g. eating, drinking, cooking, building, sleeping etc.) by talking to them about what they are doing and what they see other people doing. You can then use these words to add to their single words e.g. "eating apple", "daddy's sleeping" etc.

- **What's Teddy doing?**

Try to make Teddy (or somebody like action man) do different things and ask your child to tell you what teddy is doing (e.g. "Teddy's jumping"). Then swap and ask your child to make teddy do something so that you can guess what he's doing.

- **Hide and Seek**

Encourage your child to hide somewhere around the house. When you find your child tell them where they are e.g. "Matthew is in the toy box", "Helen is behind the door" etc. Once your child has developed a good understanding of the concepts "in", "on", "under" and "behind" etc. ask them to tell you where they have found you. (Please note your child will need to have a good understanding of the concepts before carrying out this activity.)



- **Picture Describing**

Try to collect a range of pictures that show different people doing different things, (e.g. a boy playing football, girl eating dinner etc.) Encourage your child to describe what is happening within the picture. To start off with your child may simply name the object within the picture or what they are doing (e.g. "phone", "drinking".) They may also need prompting questions such as "whose in the picture?" and "what are they doing?". Once the child has said the key elements, model to them how to put each part together e.g. "The boy is painting a picture."

- **Playing shops**

Set up a pretend shop with a range of objects in, if available use pretend money/till/shopping trolley. Have an adult pretend to be the shop keeper and encourage each child to come into the shop and ask for one of the items. To start off with your child may simply point to the item or name it, model the full sentence back to them "Please can I have an apple". The more confident your child becomes ask them to ask for 2, 3, 4 items etc. Encourage them to say "hello", "goodbye", "please" and "thank you".

- **Telephone**

Talking on the telephone can be a scary thing for a child, however it is a great way at encouraging communication. Try making pretend telephones out of cups and string, using pretend phones and having conversations with your child. Encourage them to say "Hello" and "goodbye" and ask them simple questions such as "How are you?", "what are you doing" etc. As well as this model short sentences to your child e.g. "I'm eating dinner". As your child becomes more confident encourage them to have real phone conversation to daddy or grandma.

