

If your child is between 0-11 months, try doing these things together...

To support your child's listening skills and attention:

Look at me look at you: Sit your child facing you on your knee and sing songs and rhymes; especially those with actions or lots of repetition.

Look and grab: If you have a hanging mobile try talking to your child about what they can see, hear and touch. Try making your own mobile using different objects such as teaspoons, bells, feathers or scarves, but remember not to put too many objects on at one time.

To support your child's understanding of language:

Chatter matters: Remember to talk to your child slowly and clearly in short sentences about what you are doing and where you are going (even if they cannot understand what you are saying yet) and use their name to get their attention. This will help their brain to develop.

Peek-a-boo: Hold a small scarf up between you and your child and say "Where has (name) gone?" Put the scarf down and say "There you are!" or "Peek-a-boo I can see you!" Use lots of facial expressions to reinforce what you are saying.

To support your child's talking skills:

Look out and tune in: Carry your child to a window or doorstep where you can see the outside world. Talk gently about the things you can see. Go for a walk outside and notice what your child is looking at and talk about it.

Copy cat: Copy the sounds your child makes. Try making new sounds and expressions such as making kisses with your lips, blowing out your cheeks or blinking your eyes. Remember it takes a lot of effort for children to copy you so do this over and over again.

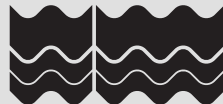
Play sounds: Make play sounds that go with actions like 'bang' as a door shuts, or 'shshsh' for running water.

To support your child's social communication skills:

Eye to eye: Make feeding time a special time when you can be close to your child, look into your child's eyes, smile and talk to them. Remember when children are very small their eyes focus on objects and faces 20-25cm away, perfect for feeding.

Share a smile: Hold your child close to you and facing you; smile at them and rub noses with them. When your child is a little older try using a mirror so they can smile at themselves.

Tiny strokes: When your child is warm and relaxed; for example after a bath, talk gently and sing or hum as you stroke their arms and body. Children who are stroked and cuddled a lot develop more quickly, as gently stroking their skin stimulates their brain to grow.



If your child is between 8-20 months, try doing these things together...

To support your child's listening skills and attention:

A basket full of feelings: Gather a selection of different objects and place them in a basket or box; for example a pan, wooden spoon, sieve, feather, keys, loofah, sponge, shell, brush or wooden pegs. Sit your child close to the objects and allow them to explore, and then try naming the objects as they pick them up. Remember to keep the basket interesting by removing and adding objects regularly.

1, 2, 3 sing and dance with me: Sing lots of songs and rhymes with your child, especially ones with actions or lots of repetition. Good times to do this are when you are changing their nappy, getting them dressed or at bath time. You can clap along or try dancing; for example rock to 'Row, row, row your boat'. Remember you can always make up your own words.

To support your child's understanding of language:

What is in the box?: Find a box and put interesting things in it; for example favourite toys, kitchen utensils, clothes or pictures of people who are special to your child. As your child plays with them tell them what they are called.

Lift the flap: Borrow 'lift the flap' books from your local library. Look at the pictures together, naming what you can see.

Talk time: Use gesture to help your child understand what you are saying such as miming a drinking action when saying "Do you want a drink?"

Where is it?: Make a game of asking simple questions such as "Where is your shoe?" or "Where is your nose?"

To support your child's talking skills:

Who is on the phone?: If you have an old mobile or toy phone use it to have pretend phone calls with your child. Remember to encourage their attempts at talking even if it's babble.

Point and name: When your child points to things tell them what they are called such as door, window, cat, shoe, nose or toe. Remember that sometimes your child points because they want to know what something is called and not necessarily because they want it.

To support your child's social communication skills:

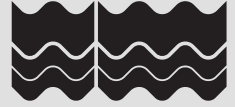
Time to chat: When you chat with your child leave time for them to say something back.

Talk as you go: When you are busy in the house talk to your child about what you are doing; for example "Lets get this washing out of the machine, it's all wet, shall we hang it on the line?" Remember your child can understand lots more words than they can say.

I play you play: Sit with your child and give them something that makes a noise such as a pan and wooden spoon and have a similar object yourself. Let your child explore the sounds they can make with the objects and then take turns. Remember to be enthusiastic as you play together.

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If your child is between 16-26 months, try doing these things together...

To support your child's listening skills and attention:

Hide and find it: Show your child a toy and let them explore what it looks like and how it feels. Hide the toy under a blanket and ask "Where's the gone?" Try getting your child to hide and name things.

Say and sing: Take time to share action rhymes and songs with your child as you go about your day. This will help them become familiar with the rhythms of language. Songs and rhymes help your child learn to read and write when they are older.

To support your child's understanding of language:

Talking tasks: Whilst carrying out everyday chores such as unpacking the shopping or loading the washing machine, ask your child to help you by passing you items.

Walk talk: Go for a walk with your child. Talk about what you can see and collect any things they are particularly interested in; for example leaves, twigs and stones. Talk about what you collected when you get home.

To support your child's talking skills:

Wait and see: Try to give your child long enough to respond to you. At this age your child might need up to 12 seconds to think about what you have said and respond.

A family affair: Gather together objects which are important to your child; for example one of their shoes, a special person's shoe (dad/mum/brother), a hat, pictures of family members, a child's rattle or a child's sock and talk about them.

To support your child's social communication skills:

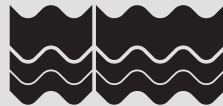
Choose a story: Find a quiet five minutes to share a story with your child. Remember children love looking at the same books again and again and it is good to re-visit favourite stories.

Pretend play: When you are cooking, try giving your child some kitchen objects to play with such as a pan and some dried pasta, a wooden spoon and some empty food cartons. They can then pretend to do what you are doing.

You and me: You are the best toy your child has and they love to spend time with you.

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If your child is between 22-36 months, try doing these things together...

To support your child's listening skills and attention:

Listen up: When out and about with your child, try to pick out some of the sounds you can hear such as cars, birds or planes. Draw their attention to the sound and ask them to listen for other sounds they can hear.

A noisy read: Choose a book you know well and are confident to share with your child. As you read the story, try to introduce different voices for the characters and sounds for what is happening. Try using a book such as 'Walking through the Jungle' or 'Dear Zoo'.

To support your child's understanding of language:

Find and seek: Hide objects either around your home, or if you have one, in your garden. Show your child what you are hiding then ask them to go and find it. Use toys that are easy to describe; for example "Can you find me the ball?" or "Can you find me the little teddy?" Try asking your child to run/jump/skip to find objects.

Story telling: Make up a simple story involving objects that your child is familiar with such as a cuddly toy or a hat. Keep the story short and include things your child has done recently; for example 'Teddy goes to the beach'.

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To support your child's talking skills:

A rhyme a day: During everyday routines sing songs and rhymes that fit in with what you are doing; for example when getting dressed sing 'Head shoulders knees and toes' or when you are out and about sing 'The wheels on the bus' or when you are cooking sing 'Five fat sausages'. Try changing the words to include your child's name in the rhyme.

Listen and extend: When your child says things to you like "Look a doggy" answer them adding more language including some describing words; for example "Yes it's a big black dog".

Running commentary: Remember to talk to your child about what you are doing; for example "We need to find your shoes so we can go to the shop" or "It's raining outside so we'd better put on your wellies."

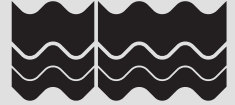
To support your child's social communication skills:

Talk time: Encourage your child to talk with you about what is happening. They will need lots of time to find their words and respond to your simple questions. Try adding on a few words to extend their language; for example if your child says "Mummy got new shoes" then you could say "Yes I bought my new shoes in town."

Making friends: Make sure your child has opportunities to spend time with other children such as at a Children's Centre group.

How do you feel?: Take the opportunity to talk about feelings; for example "I can see you're sad because you want a turn on the bike."

Voice play: Change the tone of your voice, sometimes whisper or sometimes speak loudly. Get your child to copy you.



If your child is between 30-50 months, try doing these things together...

To support your child's listening skills and attention:

Follow my leader: Play 'Follow my leader' getting your child to copy your actions. Then try asking them to be the leader and copy their actions.

Clap along: Sing or listen to songs and clap along together.

What comes next?: When you are reading a familiar story with your child, try stopping just before something exciting happens and ask them what they think is going to happen next.

Talk time: It is good to find a quiet time to talk together but don't forget that you can chat when you are enjoying active games like running and jumping in the park.

What can I hear?: Stop for a minute and listen together for what you can hear.

To support your child's understanding of language:

What's in the box?: Find a few familiar objects and hide them in a box or under some fabric so your child cannot see them. Choose an object and describe using interesting words and see if they can guess what it is such as rough/smooth, furry, spiky, round or hard/soft.

I wonder...: Begin to ask simple questions to help your child to think about how and why things happen such as "I wonder why that worm likes it in the ground?" or "I wonder how we can get this table clean?"

Where are you?: Try to use words like 'on', 'through' or 'behind', as your child moves around; for example at the park say "Look you're going through the tunnel."

To support your child's talking skills:

Update: When you have spent time away from your child, ask them to tell you about what they have been doing; for example “What did you do at granny’s today?” They may need some prompting.

Planning the day: Talk to your child about what you are going to do today; for example “Let’s get dressed and then have breakfast and then go to the shops.” Involve your child in choosing snacks to take with you or jobs you need to do before you leave such as hanging out the washing.

Word play: Think of words that begin with the same sound; for example ‘Seven, silly sausages’. Have fun with real and made up words that rhyme such as ‘school, rule, pool’ and ‘sig, squig, mig’.

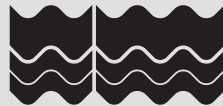
To support your child's social communication skills:

Story play: Play alongside your child talking about what you are doing; for example “I’ll put a bridge over my train track here and then the people can get to the station.”

Playing together: When playing with your child make up stories as you go such as “Here comes my train wheee, is it going to crash into yours?”

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If your child is between 40-60 months, try doing these things together...

To support your child's listening skills and attention:

Off to the shops: Write a list before you go shopping (your child can play at writing their own list too). When you are out you can ask your child to be 'in charge' of the list and help you find things from the shelves.

Story time: When reading and telling familiar stories with your child, pause as you read and talk with them about what has happened and what might happen next. You can bring stories to life by finding familiar objects from the story and using them to re-tell the story; for example for 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' find a doll or a bear or a bowl.

To support your child's understanding of language:

Grow my vocabulary: When you are playing with your child, find opportunities to introduce describing and doing words like enormous, huge, tiny, prickly, creeping or hopping. Your child will find it easier to understand new words when they are part of play or an outing such as "I can see you crawling through the tunnel" or "You're right, it's a black dog and it's got a curly tail."

Word play: Your child is beginning to have a sense of humour so have fun making up nonsense rhymes and sharing simple jokes.

Sort it out: Gather together a group of objects and ask your child to sort them with you in different ways; for example a horse, a bear, a scarf, a shoe and a bag. Remember there are different ways to sort; for example by size, colour or things that go together. The important thing is to talk to your child about how you have sorted together.

Talking story: Tell your child familiar or made up stories without using a book.

To support your child's talking skills:

Treasure: Keep interesting objects that you might otherwise throw out such as old watches, hair accessories, scarves, shells, buttons and pine cones and put them in a box. Enjoy looking through the box with your child and talk about them; for example "I really like this bumpy, jagged shell." This will help increase your child's vocabulary.

You play role play: Play with your child in imaginary situations; for example they are a shop keeper and you are a customer or they are a vet and you are taking their animals (toys) to be treated. Try making pretend 'houses' or dens for explorers out of simple household items such as boxes, sheets and clothes airers. This is a great thing to do indoors and outdoors.

Talking puppets: Puppets are a great way to encourage your child to talk.

Feely bags: Find a bag, place an object in the bag and ask your child to describe it without looking at the object.

To support your child's social communication skills:

Talk to others: Try to give your child as many opportunities to talk in different situations and to different people. Remember children might need up to 12 seconds to respond!

Choices: Try to give your child opportunities to make their own choices; for example at breakfast ask them if they would like cereal or toast. Involve them in solving problems; for example "Oh no! We've run out of cereal so what shall we do?"

Phone and talk: Help your child to speak to familiar people on the phone such as a grandparent. Get them to talk about what they have done and encourage them to listen to the person on the other end.

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