

FACE TO FACE

Get down to their level and play/talk face to face with your child e.g. kneel down, lay on the floor, or sit on the floor with your child.

Why: Playing face to face helps your child see your mouth and face when talking. It's also easier to get an interaction going when you're face to face.

When: While playing, during snacks/mealtimes or when you're getting them dressed. You could try getting face to face during book reading too.



USE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

Name the specific things you're interacting with/talking about. Avoid more vague words such as 'it', 'them'.

Why: Some kids over-generalise non-specific words and it's harder to understand what they are trying to tell you. It's better to model words that add content and meaning to their language.

When: During play, name the object they are playing with e.g. "ball" and what you want them to do "roll the ball" (instead of "roll it").



FOLLOW THEIR LEAD

Play and talk with them about the things that they are interested in. Watch what your child is doing, then copy and join in with this.

Why: If you follow their lead, it shows them you are interested in the same things they are. Children also learn best when they're having fun, so if you're doing something they enjoy it benefits their learning.

When: During play, watch what they are playing with and HOW they are playing with it. See if you can join in.



NAMING AND COMMENTING

Name the things that your child is playing with, looking at, doing, eating etc. You can also comment on the things YOU are doing.

Why: Using simple language during play and daily routines helps children to understand what is happening. It gives them the words they can use when they do the activity again.

When: When you're getting them dressed, name the piece of clothing you're putting on e.g. "pants", and the action e.g. "on", "off", or how they look or feel e.g. "dirty", "red", "soft", "warm".



GESTURES AND SIGNS

use a gesture or a sign that goes along with the words that you are saying. Say the word verbally and make the sign/gesture at the same time.

Why: gestures and signs give clues about what we are saying. They also give kids an alternative way to communicate when they're not yet ready to say them verbally.

When: 'Core words' work well with signs - things like verbs e.g. 'push', 'drink', 'stop'. Try using a sign in multiple contexts e.g. 'open' could be used to describe opening a door, opening a box, opening eyes.

