

Modelling speech and language

Children learn speech and language from what they hear around them. It is important that when a child makes a mistake that you respond to them with the correct sounds, words or sentences so that they can hear how it should sound.

There is no need to ask your child to repeat what you are saying, hearing how it should sound will often be enough.

Speech sounds

- Repeat words clearly back to the child e.g. child says “look, a tat”, adult says “Yes, it’s a cat”
- Emphasise the sounds your child finds difficult when you are talking e.g. “it’s a cat”
- Try to do this without criticising your child or drawing attention to their errors.
- Try not to interrupt the flow of the conversation - aim to keep it natural and respond to what they have said.

Vocabulary

- Label items found in your child’s environment e.g. “ball”, “carrot”.
- Label actions your child is doing e.g. “jumping”, “running”
- This could include words from pictures, books and toys e.g. “submarine”, “badger”, “castle”.
- Move from asking questions such as “what’s that?” to comments – “look, there’s a butterfly”.
- Use repetition as children need to hear words several times before they remember them.
- Say the word slowly and clearly.

Language

- Repeat the sentence that you think your child is trying to say e.g. child says: “swimming, fish, big fish.”
adult says: “yes, the big fish is swimming”
- Talk aloud and give a commentary about what you or your child is doing, seeing, hearing or feeling e.g. adult says: “The train is arriving at the station”, “Grandad’s driving fast”

