

Speech, Language and Communication Toolkit

Information and guidance for parents and carers

Your Child's Language Journey from 0-11 Years



Part of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Partnership
Programme across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

Supporting Language Development

Language develops at different rates, but there are key milestones along the way. Select your child's age below to find out what to expect and simple activities to support their development.

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0 - 12 Months

By 12 months, a baby will typically stop and look when they hear their own name. They will also be gradually starting to develop speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults; says sounds like "baba, nono, gogo".

You can help them by engaging in activities with them:

Play peek-a-boo Tiny Happy People - Peek-a-Boo	Sing songs and rhymes Tiny Happy People - Songs to sing to babies
Early conversations through sounds and facial expressions Tiny Happy People - Mini-conversations with babies	Babbling and play conversations Tiny Happy People - Babbling 6-9 months Tiny Happy People - Get baby to babble more
Talk about their interests Tiny Happy People - Turning into your babies interests	Comment on what they are doing or playing with Tiny Happy People - Pointing out and naming things
Find opportunities for chat, even on busy days Tiny Happy People - Bath time chat	Look at pictures, books and objects together Tiny Happy People - Picture playtime
Get face-to-face Tiny Happy People - Chatting while changing a nappy.	Speech and Language UK information and advice Communicate between 0-6 months Communicate between 2-12 months

12 - 18 Months

By 18 months, children can typically:

- Understand lots more words than they can say
- Understand some simple questions and instructions like "where's Daddy?" and "hug Mummy"
- Say up to 20 single words (such as mummy, juice, cat) to make requests or comments
- Use a lot of babble and single words
- Copy things adults say or do
- Enjoy simple pretend play, such as giving dolly a drink or pretending to talk on the phone

You can help through engaging in activities with them:

<p>Follow their lead. Talk about and play with what they are focussed on</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Following baby's lead</p>	<p>Offer choices to give them an opportunity to communicate</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Offering choices</p>
<p>Play simple ready, steady, go games to help them develop their listening and attention skills</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Ready, Steady, Go</p>	<p>Play 'what's in the bag?' to help them learn the names of everyday objects</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - What's in the bag?</p>
<p>Look at books together</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Reading to toddlers</p>	<p>Find opportunities for chat, even on busy days</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Fun at the supermarket</p>
<p>Model language throughout the day, as you complete routine tasks</p> <p>Tiny Happy People Laundry Time</p>	<p>Engage in pretend play together</p> <p>Tiny Happy People Night, night teddy</p>
<p>Sing songs and nursery rhymes together</p> <p>Tiny Happy People Singing nursery rhymes</p>	<p>Follow the links for further information and advice:</p> <p>Speech and Language UK - 12-18 months</p> <p>Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust - Talking Fun- 1 year</p>

18 - 24 Months

By 24 months, children can typically:

- Understand at least 200 words
- Understand more simple questions and instructions. For example, "where is your shoe?", "show me your nose"
- Say 50 or more single words (many of these will be unclear, especially to unfamiliar people)
- Start to put short phrases together with 2-3 words, such as "more milk" or "hello mummy"
- Ask questions like "what's that?" or "where going?"

You can help through engaging in activities with them:

<p>Expand on the language they are using, to help them use gradually longer phrases</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Expanding on toddler's words</p>	<p>Engage in pretend play together</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Early pretend play with toddlers</p>
<p>Play games which explore everyday objects, to develop their vocabulary</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Treasure box</p>	<p>Read books together, to teach them new words and give them opportunities for talking</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Reading books with a toddler</p>
<p>Explore different environments together, talking about what you can see</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Playing in the Garden</p>	<p>Play hide and seek to give your child the opportunity to practise following instructions</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Hide and seek game with toddlers</p>
<p>Offer choices to give your child an opportunity to communicate</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Offering toddlers breakfast choices</p>	<p>Involve your child in tasks around the house</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Toddlers helping around the house</p>
<p>Play copying games together to engage your child and provide opportunities for communicating</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Copying games</p>	<p>Follow the links for further information and advice:</p> <p>Speech and Language UK - 18-24 months</p> <p>NHS UK - Hungry Little Minds 1-2 years</p>

2 - 3 Years

By 3 years, children can typically:

- Listen to and understand a simple story with pictures
- Understand longer instructions, with 2-3 parts e.g. "put **daddy's cup** on the **table**", as well as simple 'who', 'what' and 'where' questions
- Understand 300 words, including some early concepts e.g. 'big and 'little'
- Put 4-5 word sentences together, such as 'mummy want more juice' or 'Leo took my ball'. These will include action words e.g. 'run' or 'fall'
- Start to add 's' to words to show there is more than one of something. For example, 'car' becomes 'cars'

You can help through engaging in activities with them:

<p>Repeat back their words and sentences, filling in any gaps or words that aren't quite right.</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Responding to toddler's with longer sentences</p>	<p>Talk about what you can see, using sentences which are slightly longer than those they're using</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - What's out of the window?</p>
<p>Model position words during hide and seek</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Hide the toy game</p>	<p>Model action words at the park</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Play park fun with toddlers</p>
<p>Talk about the sounds you can hear to develop their vocabulary</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Play a game of 'What's that sound?'</p>	<p>Involve your child in tasks around the house</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Sorting washing with toddlers</p>
<p>Engage in role play to support their imagination</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Superhero role play.</p>	<p>Model action words during singing</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Singing action songs with toddlers</p>
<p>Learn numbers and colours through play</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Learning numbers and counting through play.</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Learning colours and making a rainbow</p>	<p>Follow the links for further information and advice:</p> <p>Speech and Language UK - 2-3 years</p> <p>NHS UK Hungry Little Minds- 2-3 years</p> <p>Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust - Talking Fun- 2 years</p>

3 - 4 Years

By 4 years, children can typically:

- Listen to storybooks with pictures and answer some questions about a story you've just read together
- Understand and often use words for colour (e.g. 'red'), number (e.g. 'three fingers') and time (e.g. 'tomorrow')
- Answer basic 'why' questions, although this will still be developing
- Use 4-6 word sentences, and start to link 2 sentences together by using 'and'. For example, 'I went to daddy's house and I had fish fingers'
- Talk about the future and the past, although they'll make some mistakes in their talking e.g. 'I goed' or 'I runned'
- Tell a short story about something that's happened to them. For example, 'Two boys played with the ball. It went over the fence'
- Enjoy pretend play and start to engage in joint play with others
- Start conversations with you and with other people
- Ask many questions using words like 'what', 'where', and 'why'

You can help through engaging in activities with them:

<p>Talk about the past and future</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Talking about past and future</p>	<p>Read together and ask them to retell the story</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Using picture books to share and retell stories</p>
<p>Model language throughout the day, as you complete routine tasks.</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Shopping basket fun</p>	<p>Model describing words during I Spy</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - I Spy games on walks</p>
<p>Support them to talk about feelings during play</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Talking about feelings with toys</p>	<p>Model 'same' and 'different' during play</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Matching game</p>
<p>Take time to chat to your child about their day</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Taking time to chat with your 3 year old</p>	<p>Model describing words through sensory games</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - What's in the sensory bag?</p>
<p>Model opposites during play</p> <p>Tiny Happy People - Have fun learning opposites</p>	<p>Follow the links for further information and advice:</p> <p>Speech and Language UK -3-4 years</p> <p>NHS UK Hungry Little Minds - 3-5 years</p> <p>Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Talking Fun- 3 years</p>

4 - 5 Years

By 5 years, children can typically:

- Listen to and follow instructions without having to stop what they are doing
- Understand longer instructions, for example 'Find some pens, sit down, and draw a picture'
- Understand and answer questions about simple stories with no pictures
- Choose who to play with and play make believe games, such as pretending be superheroes
- Take turns in longer conversations and stay on the same topic
- Understand words like 'first' and 'next' in a sentence. For example, 'First we're going to wash our hands, next we'll eat our snack'
- Understand words such as 'above', 'below' and 'between' to describe the position of things
- Use long and detailed sentences. For example, 'We went to the park but we came home because Joe hurt himself'. They may still make little mistakes like saying 'mouses' instead of mice or 'goed' instead of went
- Talk about things that have already happened or will happen in the future. For example, 'Yesterday we went swimming'

You can help through engaging in activities with them:

Use everyday tasks as an opportunity to chat Tiny Happy People - Make tidying fun	Support them with their vocabulary of feelings Tiny Happy People - Feelings tree
Explore word sounds together to support their speech and phonics Tiny Happy People - Exploring word sounds	Play I Spy to develop their vocabulary and phonics Tiny Happy People - I Spy game for learning phonics
Learn plurals through games. Tiny Happy People - Playing the Plural Game	Learn positional language through play Tiny Happy People - Over and under game
Make up stories together to support them to use imaginative language. Tiny Happy People - Making up stories with kids	Support their describing words through play Tiny Happy People - Putting things in order
Play sound games to support their speech and phonics Tiny Happy People - Sound sorting box	Follow the links for further information and advice: Speech and Language UK - 4-5 years NHS UK Hungry Little Minds - 3-5 years Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust - Talking Fun- 4 years

5 - 7 Years

By 7 years, children can typically:

- Focus on one thing for longer without being reminded
- Follow and remember a story that is told over several days
- Understand long instructions, for example, 'Put the bricks back in the box, go outside, and find your coat'
- Learn that the same word can mean two things, such as 'orange' the fruit and 'orange' the colour
- Learn that different words can mean the same thing, such as 'minus' and 'take away'
- Understand feelings and descriptive words like 'carefully', 'slowly' or 'surprised'
- Talk for lots of different reasons, such as to share complex ideas, to solve problems or to tell jokes
- Use long sentences and put the right endings on their words, for example 'My teddy likes sitting on a bed because beds are softer'
- Use words like 'so', 'because' to join their sentences together. E.g. 'It's my birthday so I'm staying up late'
- Can take turns to talk in conversations with adults and children in lots of different situations, either with one person or in a group

You can help by:

- Making time to talk, and finding opportunities to communicate with one another
- Repeating back what your child has said using correct grammar or expanding on the information given
- Giving your child time to respond, don't be afraid of silences as these can encourage your child to 'fill the gaps'
- Commenting on what your child is doing so they can hear the correct language used
- Using open questions (questions that require more than a one word answer) when asking questions e.g. "tell me something you liked about today"
- Teaching them new words, such as words to do with positions, time and size
- Teach them that words have similar meanings, for example, if they know what a coat is, teach them body warmer, fleece, rain mac etc



7 - 11 Years

By 11, children can typically:

- Use sentences to link their ideas together, make predictions and draw conclusions
- Use sentences that normally have between 8 and 10 words (although often their sentences can be much longer)
- Can make up a complicated story including lots of information about the characters and what happened
- Can talk using more advanced words, such as 'massive', 'enormous' or 'huge' instead of 'big'
- Understand other points of view and show that they agree or disagree
- Keep a conversation going by giving reasons and explaining choices
- Start conversations with adults and children they don't know
- Understand long requests with lots of information in them. For example, 'Please find the stripey bag at the back of the PE cupboard and put it in the big box in the cloakroom'

You can help by:

- Engage your child in lots of conversations- these will support their ongoing language development. Ask questions and show interest in what they talk about
- Model more complex vocabulary to them e.g. your child says "it was big", you could say "yes, it was immense!"
- Talk about new words and their meaning
- Make sure they will say when they have not understood something, especially in school

