

Using questions and comments

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What to do

Commenting means you talk to your child about their world.

Saying what is happening, for example:

- During tea party play 'dolly drinking milk' and 'plate away'.
- At bath time 'washing your toes'.

Explaining and telling your child what a word means, for example:

- 'A hat to keep your head warm'.

Adding something extra so your child keeps developing their language, for example:

- Child says 'Water', Adult says 'Water all gone'.
- Child says 'Daddy ball', Adult says 'Daddy kicking the ball'.

Use a range of words, for example:

- Naming words e.g. cat, dog, car, hat and coat.
- Actions e.g. drinking, sleeping, walking and washing.
- Describing words e.g. dirty, little and hot.

Questions

Questions are an important part of language. They show that we are interested in others and want to have a conversation. Questions however don't always help children to learn new words. We therefore should be using comments like those above rather than questions.

Remember questions:

- Are for when you need an answer not to 'check' what your child knows.
- Can put pressure on reluctant talkers. Using a comment reduces this pressure and gives them a good language model.

Why is it important?

Children learn language by listening to what other people say. You are your child's most important teacher. Everyday conversation you have can help your child learn words.

During their early years, children have to learn between 5-8 words every single day. They first learn about objects, then actions, before beginning to join words together. They need other people to help them to learn and one of the best ways we can do this is by commenting.

