

# Helping Your Child with Speaking and Listening



# Why are Speaking and Listening so Important?

Speaking and listening are at the heart of children's learning. Children need to be confident communicators and active listeners in order to learn about the world they live in. Language skills are crucial, and children begin to develop these skills from birth.

At school children are taught to:

- Think about what they say
  - Choose the right words
- Listen to others before they speak
  - Talk to others
  - Share ideas

'Listening and Speaking are the roots of reading and writing'  
(Ofsted 2005)

# Parents' Role

Parents and carers play a crucial role in developing children's communication skills.

From the moment of birth parents are a child's first teachers and provide a powerful example of good communication.

Research shows that even very tiny babies understand the rules of conversation and can 'take turns' in communicating with an adult, by copying facial expressions for example.

Conversation with parents has been found to be one of the most important factors influencing children's achievement.



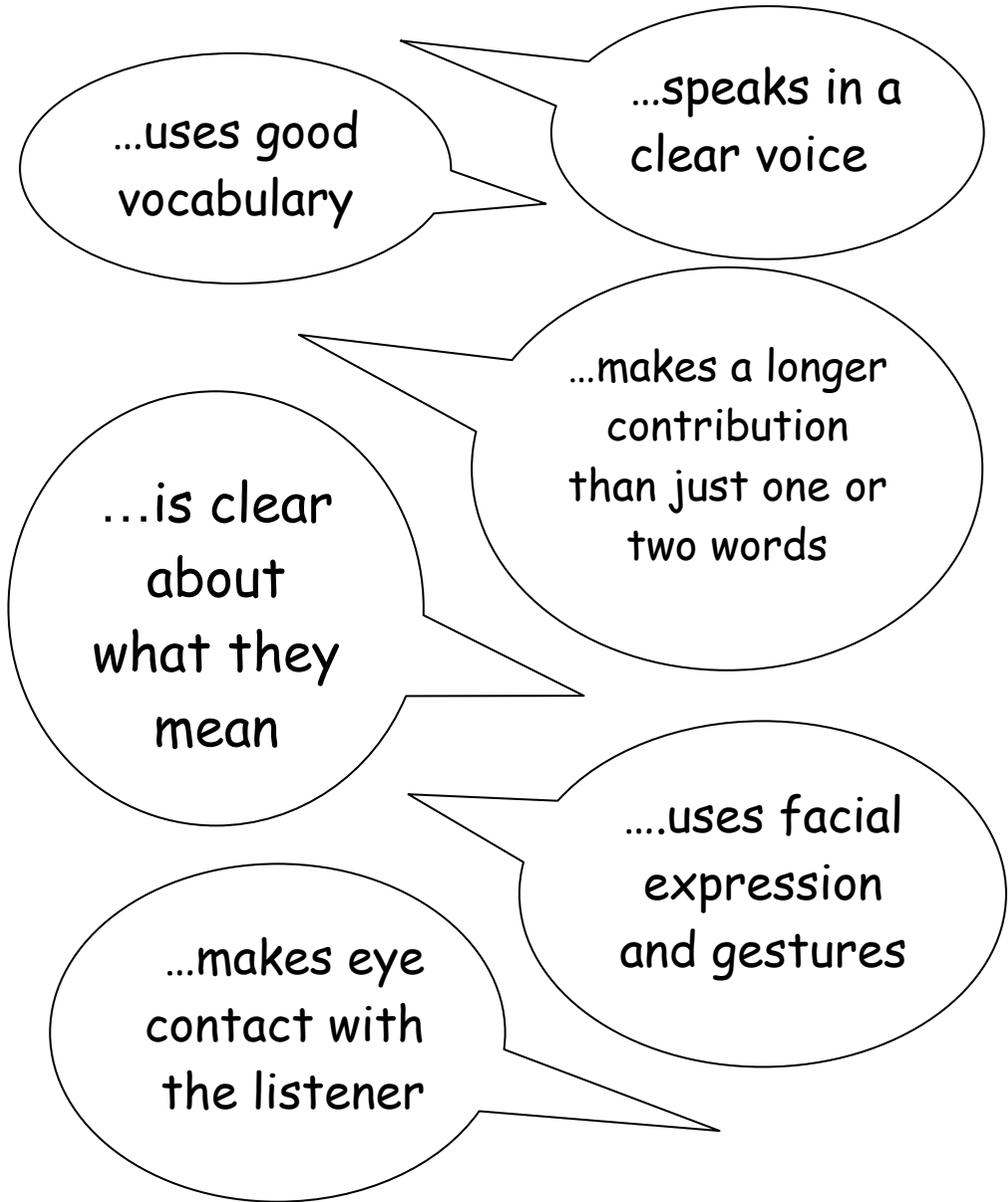
# Developing Talk

From the very earliest stages parents are teaching their children to communicate - through playing, chatting, singing, commenting and questioning parents are modelling speaking all the time.

Here are some ways to develop your child's speaking skills:

- **Make time to talk to your child**
- **Encourage your child to talk**
  - **Listen patiently**
- **Actively encourage longer conversations.**
  - **Asking questions**
  - **Be a good role model**

# A Good Speaker...



...uses good vocabulary

...speaks in a clear voice

...is clear about what they mean

...makes a longer contribution than just one or two words

...makes eye contact with the listener

...uses facial expression and gestures

Children love to make up their own versions of stories.

Encourage your child to finish the lines of poems and rhymes.

## **BOOKS, SONGS AND RHYMES**

Teach your children nursery rhymes, sing songs and share books with them every single day. Children can learn an enormous number of new and exciting words from sharing and talking about a book. Nursery rhymes, poems and songs teach children about sound patterns and how to have fun with words.

Sing along to the radio and CDs together.

Children love to hear familiar stories over and over again.

## **Things to talk about and listen to...**

**...favourite food.**



**...the school day.**



**..a journey or trip .**

**...friends.**

**...something in a comic or newspaper.**

**...special events.**



# Developing Listening

Speaking and listening go hand in hand. Listening skills are important for all sorts of reasons.

Here are some ways to develop your child's listening skills:

- Story tapes, songs and rhymes in the car and elsewhere
- Children's radio
- Ask them to follow clear simple instructions
- Give them the opportunity to make choices: 'Would you like to wear a blue jumper or a red one today?'
- Take turns in conversations with them and encourage them to listen to your contribution.
- Play language games, like 'I-Spy', '20 questions', 'What am I?', 'Continue the story', or you start a story and the children carry it on.
- Enjoy telling jokes and encourage the re-telling of them.
- Encourage the use of the telephone, within reason!
- Take time to answer your child's questions and model being a good listener!

## A Good Listener...

...makes eye contact with the speaker

...listens carefully

...responds appropriately to the speaker.

...asks relevant questions

...turns the body to face the person who is speaking

...turns off distracting noises such as the radio or television