

How you can help your child's speaking and listening at home

- Talk! And talk a lot to your children. All of the research agrees that the more language a child hears and is spoken and listened to the better their life outcomes (not just at school).
- Create times for talking and sharing. This could be about theirs and your day, something you are looking at or doing, or a shared book.
- Talking whilst doing something else is a useful lead-in for example whilst playing with toys, building a model or laying the table for a meal.
- Rather than always questioning, try opening up conversations with, "I wonder why/what/whether ..."
- When asking questions make them open rather than closed; for example: "What did you play at lunchtime today?" rather than, "Did you play chase today?"
- Help encourage good communication skills by imagining that you don't know what your child is going to say or that you don't know what they are referring to. As parents, we know so much about our children's lives that we fill in gaps but this can deprive them of learning how to fully explain themselves which can disadvantage them when talking with others.
- Encourage turn-taking and careful listening: remember that half of effective communicating is the ability to listen. The ability to keep listening until someone has finished talking whilst holding in mind what we want to say is a skill that needs practising.