

Developing language and communication skills is like building a tower of blocks. We start building from the bottom. The blocks of the language tower depend on each other and the lower blocks continue to develop as the tower grows taller making it stable and strong.

So, if a child's interaction, attention or understanding is weak then they can't build the next skills on top. Or they may end up with a wobbly tower that falls down!

If your child isn't talking, it may be because one of the lower bricks isn't well enough developed to allow the talking brick to be added.



Interaction

Learning the skills of interaction is important for having conversations. Interaction involves taking turns, so lots of activities work for this. You can take turns while adding a brick to a tower, playing a board game like Snakes & Ladders or while throwing/rolling a ball to each other.

Attention & Listening

Listening is an essential skill for talking & learning.

An indoor treasure hunt is a fantastic way of having fun with your child and encourages lots of conversation. Take turns hiding a toy and then use words like 'warmer' or 'colder' to describe where the hidden object is.

Play

Children learn all kinds of skills through play: how things work; how to interact and share with others; how to play with different toys and to enter a world of imagination. They often love adults to play with them. Follow your child's lead and join in the play.

Understanding

Understanding language is essential for talking and learning. Children first need to understand what single words mean. After that, they gradually build their skills and develop the ability to understand short phrases, sentences, conversations and stories.

Expand your child's understanding of action words. Talk about all the actions you are doing.

Talking

Talking develops from using single words, to joining words together to make sentences. We talk for different reasons e.g. to share our ideas, to ask for things, to ask questions and to tell people how we are feeling.

Sorting objects into a row e.g. from big to small or light to heavy, is a great way to develop your child's communication and reasoning skills. Encourage your child to explain what they are doing at each step. Try using measure words like, 'bigger' or 'biggest' when sorting.

Speech Sounds

Children's use of speech sounds develops over time.

If your child says a word incorrectly, the best way to help them is simply to say the word as it should be said. It is even better if you say it a few times e.g.

Child: 'My tup'. Adult: 'It's your cup. Your cup is blue. My cup is red. We have 2 cups'