



Top Tips

for chatting with young children

1

Ensure the child is given the opportunity to take part in general conversation with an adult every day.

2

Open ended questions can't be answered with yes or a no and tend to start with a 'What', 'How', 'Where' or a 'Why' e.g. "What are you drawing?"

3

Encourage make believe play. When a child is playing their imagination will take over leading to great opportunities for talking.

4

Listen more than you talk. This is a fantastic opportunity to teach children good speaking and listening skills.

5

When chatting with a child, crouch or sit down so that you are at the same level, giving eye contact and using facial expressions and gestures will show you are listening.

6

Give children plenty of time to respond, sometimes children need a little while to process the information before they reply.

Chatting, playing and reading are all fun ways to bond with children and help them to get better at learning. It's never too early to help develop children's communication, speech, reading and writing skills.





'It may seem an obvious thing to say, but one of the best things we can do with young children is to have interesting and enjoyable conversations with them'

Michael Rosen,
Children's Laureate



'Language development is strongly supported by being active'

(Jan White: Every Child A Mover 2015)



'By 5 years of age a child's vocabulary can predict his/her educational success and outcomes at age 30'

ICAN: ELDP (2012)



Our babies love to hear our voices. As early as when they are in the womb, they start to tune into the voices and sounds around them, and often respond to more familiar voices.

National Literacy Trust



All the little things you do with your child – like everyday conversations, make-believe play and reading together – make a big difference to their development.

The **Hungry Little Minds** campaign provides lots of ideas that can help you boost your child's learning. You can slot them into your routine and your children will love them. Such as:

- Play 'I spy' on the bus with them and you can see their imaginations light up
- Talk to your child about what has happened so far in the day – for example, "We went to the shops this morning, didn't we? We bought some apples." And talk about what is going to happen next – "After lunch we'll do the washing up"
- Look at picture books together. With each new page, give your child time to point out things to you and talk about what they can see. Search Hungry Little Minds for simple tips and activities, or to find out what's available where you live.



hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk



'Reading and writing float on a sea of talk'

James Britton,
Educationalist



The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) research suggests the pandemic has deprived the youngest children of social contact and experiences essential for increasing vocabulary. Children who struggle with language at age five face literacy struggles that can have lifelong impacts. Children who have language difficulties at this age are five times more likely to fail to reach the expected standard in English aged 11 and more than twice as likely to be unemployed at 34.