

Speech and Language Therapy

Activities to Help Develop First Words

Children's first words are usually familiar, everyday words that are motivating for your child such as those listed below:

| <u>List of First Words</u> | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| Familiar Names | Common Words | Social Words | Action Words |
| Mummy | Car | Hello | Go |
| Daddy | Ball | Bye Bye | Fall |
| Own Name | Book | Please | Gone |
| Man | Dog | Thank You | Up |
| Boy | Cat | More | Stop |
| Baby | Bird | No | Walk |
| | Fish | Again | Push |
| | Shoe | | Pull |
| | Bag | | Wash |
| | Apple | | Drink |
| | Cup | | Round and Round |
| | Bus | | |
| Describing Words | Pronouns | Symbolic Words | |
| Big | Me | Beep beep | Brrrum brrum |
| Small | Mine | Choo choo | Nee nor, nee nor |
| Hot | You | Quack quack | Crash |
| Cold | Yours | Mooooo | Splash |
| Wet | | Bang | |

Before a child learns to say a word they need to learn the meaning of it. They do this by hearing the words many times and in different situations. Children also need to develop the ability to concentrate and listen, take

turns, copy, understand spoken language, use gestures, make facial expressions.

When you are modelling words, don't make the child feel pressurised to say them; they will do this when they are ready. If your child uses a sound or gesture instead of the word, respond positively as that's an important step forward, but keep modelling the spoken word as well.

During the following activities/games remember to:

- ✓ Look at your child, smile, use facial expression and gestures while talking
- ✓ Repeat single words over and over again while playing, like "pop", "bang", "wheee", "ah oh!", "splash"
- ✓ Repeat the same words or phrases each time you play a game e.g. "ready, steady, go!"
- ✓ Allow time and space for your child to express themselves
- ✓ Follow your child's lead
- ✓ Comment on what your child is doing/you are doing using short sentences
- ✓ Try not to ask too many questions



Activities to try

Bubbles – say "more" before blowing bubbles again, to encourage your child to do the same.



Building blocks, stacking cups – give your child one brick at a time to build a tower and wait for an attempt at saying "more" before giving him the next one. Say "ready steady go" before you knock down the tower. Each time you build the tower say "ready, steady, ..." and then wait to see if your child says "go!".

Balloon – blow up a bit at a time, stop and wait for your child to say "more" before making it bigger.



Toy telephone – talk into the phone and say “hello” & “bye”; give the child a turn and see if they can do the same.

Peep-po games – keep hiding and re-appearing, saying “boo!”.

Mirror and copying games – look in the mirror or at each other and make funny faces, make silly noises etc. Talk about what you see/are doing e.g. “it’s Daddy!”, “funny Joseph!” etc.



Packing toys away – say ‘bye’ to toys as you put them in the toy box. Emphasise & encourage the word “gone” when the toys have been put away, water has gone out of the bath, food has been eaten, etc.

Posting – put toys into a box with a hole in. (You can make your own postboxes out of shoeboxes, or cereal boxes). Say e.g. “car”, or “ball”, and let your child find the item. Emphasise “bye” or “gone” as they post it.



Hiding games – Take turns to cover your eyes or an object with a scarf. Repeat “where’s ...? there he is!”.



Finger puppets/toys – hide them behind your back or around the room; as they are found/reappear – say “boo!”, or “here it is!”, or what they are called e.g. “dog”.

Feely bag- put a selection of objects in a bag and take turns to take one out and name it e.g. “apple”.

Turn taking games – Play turn taking games, emphasizing whose turn it is, e.g. “mummy’s turn”.

Sharing – Share out sweets, pieces of fruit, etc, “one for mummy, one for daddy, & one for ... (child’s name)”.

Ball rolling / throwing – Roll / throw a ball to each other saying who you are throwing it to e.g. “Chloe!”, “to Toby!” etc.

Sing nursery and action rhymes – e.g. ‘Incy Wincy Spider’, ‘Wind the bobbin up’ etc. Sing them slowly enough to give



your child a chance to join in with the tune, and hopefully with one or two of the words (e.g. "clap, clap, clap").

Talk about things as you do them around the house e.g. unpacking the shopping, loading the washing machine. Emphasise one word at a time (e.g. "get the apples", "biscuits", "here are the trousers" etc.)