

Managing your child's behaviour



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Top tips from a Speech and Language Therapist

Helping your child to communicate from birth can also help you to understand their behaviour, so together you can build their speech and language skills.

Here are some ideas of how you can help:



Attention and Listening

(focusing on activities and listening to spoken words)

- Get 'face to face' with your child so you can see each other's faces. This will help you to hear and understand each other.
- It's always good to call your child's name to make sure you have their attention. Your child might not be able to listen if they are focused on something else.



Understanding

(understanding what words and sentences mean)

- Use objects or pictures to show your child what is going to happen during the day e.g. show them a toy duck at bath time. This will help your child to understand what is going to happen next.
- Only give one instruction at a time, to help them remember what you have said e.g. 'first put your pyjamas on'..... 'now brush your teeth'.
- Let your child know what you do want them to do e.g. 'walk please', not what you don't. Negative words like 'no' or 'don't' are difficult for children to understand. If you say 'don't run', your child might only understand the word 'run'.
- Try not to ask too many questions, especially if you don't give your child time to answer them. Tell them what is happening, then wait to give them time to join in e.g. 'TV has finished, now it's time for a walk. We need our shoes and ...'.



Play

(exploring toys and the world around them)

- Take time to play with your child during the day. This is how they will learn about the world around them.
- Watch what your child is interested in and play with toys the way that they want to, so they might play for longer.



Spoken language

(using words and sentences, even if the sounds aren't right)

- Help your child to develop their talking by giving them choices, as they may find it difficult to tell you what they want e.g. 'what do you want for breakfast today... cereal or toast?'. Give your child time to make a choice by looking, pointing or saying what they want.
- Children can find it hard to tell you how they are feeling, so they might use their behaviour to communicate with you. Talk about how your child is feeling and describe what is happening e.g. 'you are crying, I think you are cross because your brother took your toy, let's play with this doll instead.'
- Let your child know what is happening or what has just happened rather than asking them 'why'. Children often can't answer 'why' questions until they are about 5 years old.



Speech

(the individual sounds you use in words)

- Your child might not be able to say words clearly yet. Repeat what your child has said correctly and clearly, so they can hear the right way to say the words. If they can't make themselves understood clearly, they might get frustrated e.g. If your child says 'dod', you say 'yes it's a dog!'.
- Try not to ask your child to repeat the correct word because they might still find it difficult.



Social Interaction

(skills we need when communicating with people, e.g. turn taking, eye contact and showing an interest in others)

- Children learn from you about how to interact in social situations e.g. sharing toys. During your daily routine find opportunities for you and your child to take turns in activities such as playing peek-a-boo or taking turns to splash the water in the bath.



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