

Starting Life Well promote the 15 Top Tips for Talking

Top Tips for Talking

Tip 1



Get down to the level of the child.

Conversations are easier with children if you get down to their eye level

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Tip 2

Use a child's name before giving instructions.

Remember to attract the attention of a child before you speak.



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Tip 3



Use the right level of language.

**Use the words children understand.
You may need to break down
sentences into simpler chunks.**

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Tip 4

Give children time to respond.

Children process language slower than you, so allow plenty of time to think and formulate a response.



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Tip 5



Distractions

It is harder to focus on the child's words. Simple distractions like the TV, radio or other background noise can make it difficult to hear the child. Find a quiet corner to talk to reduce background noise.

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Tip 6

Offer comments rather than ask questions

Questions can inhibit conversation. They can make a conversation feel like an interrogation. Instead comment on what the child is doing rather than as direct questions. So instead of asking "Why didn't you paint the tree green?"

you could make a comment like "I see you've



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Tip 7



Praise achievements

**Make sure any praise is specific.
Rather than say "Well done", give
more detail—*"I loved the way you
shared the bike with....."*.**

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Tip 8

Be a role model for the language you want to hear

Children learn best from the adults around them. Be a good role model for the language, listening and conversation skills you would like to see in the children.



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Tip 9



Use visual support

Use drawings, symbols and photos to support language development. Create visual timetables to familiarise children with sequences e.g. routines and activities during a typical day.

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Tip 10

Keep the atmosphere fun

Remember to have fun with language. Try to make your time together enjoyable and relaxing. Communication should be pleasurable not stressful.



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Tip 11



Encourage conversation

For quieter children research has shown that some things help encourage conversations more than others — make encouraging noises — “Wow”, or comment on what the child is doing; say something about yourself “*I went on holiday to the seaside*”. Some things work less well — asking too many questions, or asking children to repeat themselves.

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Tip 12



Don't just give instructions, make it two-way

Sometimes instructions can dominate our conversations "Get your coat on", "Put your toys away". Language has many other uses, like praising, questioning, commenting, negotiating or clarifying ("Do you mean yesterday or tomorrow"). It's good to have a balance in the different ways we use language.

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Tip 13



Name the emotion

If a child is experiencing a strong emotion, name it so they can start to build their own vocabulary of emotions. So for example, you might say *"You're feeling angry because your toy was left out in the rain"*. When children realise that someone recognises how they're feeling, this often has a strong calming effect.

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Tip 14



Talk about what's going on in their world

It's important for children to talk about the things that interest *them*. It's good for children to feel listened to. Use their interests as a way to expand and develop their communication skills.

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Tip 15



Speak in your home language

It's important for children to learn their first words and sentences in their home language. Children will learn in English later, at nursery and school.

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