



Helping to Develop Words

- ⇒ Once children have begun to understand words that we say, they may be ready to try to say the words themselves.
- ⇒ Children will often learn social words first (e.g. 'bye', 'look') and then move on to learning names of objects (nouns), action words (verbs) and later concept vocabulary (e.g. big/little, hot/cold and colours).
- ⇒ Children will begin by using single words. When they have a vocabulary of about 50 single words we would expect them to begin to join 2 words together e.g. 'more juice' 'mummy car'.
- ⇒ Sometimes children will echo a word or phrase after you have said it. This is an important part of language development but it does not always mean that your child will be able to use the words spontaneously yet.
- ⇒ It is important that as children learn new words they attach meaning to these words. It can be tempting to ask your child to repeat words after you but this is not a useful way of helping them to develop their expressive language. Make sure what you are saying makes sense within the situation you are in.
- ⇒ When children are learning to talk, their speech sounds are often not clear and therefore difficult to understand. At this stage, it is important to focus on what your child is saying, rather than how the words sound. Your Speech and Language Therapist can advise you if you are worried about your child's speech sounds.

Developing your child's single word vocabulary

Everyday activities

Say appropriate single words for your child to listen to during everyday activities, for example while shopping; "apple", "bread", "money", "push".

It can be helpful to choose a small number of words that you use routinely during certain activities. Just concentrate on saying the words yourself and don't be tempted to ask your child to repeat after you.

Object bags

Collect together a range of everyday objects e.g. ball, car, cup, book, sock, spoon. Have these in a box or a bag. Play a game where you take each object out one at a time and name it for your child to listen to. Let your child play with the objects, naming them as your child plays. When you have finished, put each one back in the bag and see if your child can tell you what each object is called.



Moving on to joining words together

Expanding language

When you think your child is ready to join 2 words together, expand what they say by adding a word onto it to show them how they could extend their language.

E.g. Child: "car", Adult: "Daddy's car".

This can be done throughout the day during everyday activities such as shopping, getting dressed, meal times.

Do not expect your child to repeat after you. It is better that you let them listen to you saying the same phrases lots of times. Your child will say the words when they are ready to.

'Early words'

'Early words' such as 'more', 'look' and 'gone' are good words to begin with. They can be combined with other words easily. E.g. 'more juice', 'look, cat', 'biscuit gone'.

You could choose one of these early words to concentrate on at a time and add it to single words whenever it is appropriate. **Begin by saying the phrases yourself for your child to listen to.**

Tidying up

When tidying up say "teddy gone", "ball gone", "car gone" etc as you put each thing in a box or bag. Leave some gaps in your talking and see if your child can tell you what has gone.

Tea party

Have a teddy and doll (or other character that your child likes) and some plates, cups and toy food (or real food if you do not have pretend.)

As you give each thing out to the characters say lots of 2 word phrases for your child to listen to e.g. "teddy's plate", "Bob's eating", "Noddy's finished". **Leave gaps in your talking for your child to have a go at telling you what is happening.** If they say just one word, repeat it back to them adding the second word but do not ask them to repeat after you.

Join in

Join in your child's game with cars, trains or whatever it is they like to play with. Use 2 words phrases for your child to listen to whilst you are playing. You can either **comment on what your child is doing** or on what you are doing with the toys. E.g. "Bob car", "train down", "dolly's cake".