

Top 10 Toys for the Development of Communication Skills!



There are lots of ways that you can support the development of your child's communication skills. Really helpful ways to encourage communication include having fun together, making it easier for them to talk and pay attention (try having time without background noise like TV each day) and showing them the right way by modelling correct talking rather than correcting them. Playing and having time together are really important too and you can use any toys or games that you have at home.

There are some toys and games that can be particularly helpful for supporting communication and these are listed below:

- **Imaginative play toys** for example dressing up clothes, doll's house, teddy/dolly tea set, Playmobile/Happyland
You can use these toys to join in with your child's imaginative play. It will help you expand their language beyond what they can immediately see and develop their creativity. Try to comment on what they are saying and doing rather than asking lots of questions. This not only reinforces their language skills, but also shows them that you are interested and listening to them.
- **Messy play**
Messy play helps with sensory exploration and can be used to develop language skills. Things like water play, sand play, chalk boards, finger painting and playdough all help children to develop their awareness of different sensations and can be used to talk about actions, things like pour, squash, squeeze, pull, rub, and different colours and textures, like rough, soft, smooth.
- **Inset puzzles**
You can use these puzzles to help your child build their early vocabulary. You can start by commenting on the piece that they are putting in, then move on to giving them the choice "do you want the car or the fish?" before encouraging them to ask for what they want by saying "which piece do you want now?"

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- **Listening to CDs**
You can use listening CDs to encourage your child to increase their listening and attention skills (these are crucial for a child who is learning language) and help to build their vocabulary. You can add information to what they are listening to for example if they hear a cockerel crowing you can talk about farms where you might see a cockerel, the other animals that you might see etc.
- **Repetitive books** e.g. Dear Zoo, The Gingerbread Man
Help children listen to and enjoy stories. Don't be afraid to tell a story more than once, repetition helps children to understand and remember the words that they hear. Children love to join in with the bits that they remember and so books that have a repetitive line through them are great.
- **Simple lotto boards**
Lotto boards are great for helping children to develop their vocabulary. You can talk to them about the pictures they find, and move on to them telling you about the pictures for example where they find it, what you do with it
- **Colour and shape matching and counting games and activities** e.g. Dotty Dinosaurs, Red Dog Blue Dog, marble run, click clack car tracks, Mr Potato Head, Pop up Pirate, Kerplunk, Lego
These types of games will help children learn important words that will be helpful to them in nursery and school. You can play these games together, and talk about the colours and shapes that you can see around your home.
- **Puppets**
Puppets are a great way to develop imagination and story-telling skills in children. Make up stories and act them out with puppets, or re-tell familiar stories that you already know.
- **Sequencing toys** e.g. coloured bricks, threading beads
It is helpful to talk about time and sequences – play with and talk about sequences of coloured bricks or shapes as well as numbers and days of the week to encourage your child with words such as first, next, last, before, after
- **Board games for turn-taking**
Taking turns is an essential communication skill and playing any simple board games that involve taking turns not only helps children to develop this skill, it also helps them to listen and attend to an activity for longer periods of time.
- **Rhyming lotto, rhyming books**
Having fun with words and rhymes can help children learn skills they need for reading and developing literacy. By learning the differences and similarities between word sounds, your child will build the foundations for reading and writing.

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