

Talk Together



helps children
communicate

Helping babies and young children
learn skills for talking



Learning to talk

Talking, understanding others and knowing what to say are really important skills. They help children make friends, learn and enjoy life to the full.

Going from babbling baby to talkative toddler seems like a miracle, but your child needs YOU to help make this happen because they will learn most things from you.

Babies communicate with us from birth, their cries let us know if they are hungry or uncomfortable. They smile and look at us when we are talking and as we talk to them, they start to understand the simple words that we say. Their first words appear at 12 -18 months, they may not sound like adult words, but as you listen you will begin to know what they mean.

As toddlers grow, so do the number of words that they understand and use. Understanding words happens first, and using these words comes next.

After their first word, toddlers build up to about 100 words that they use one at a time. Next, they listen to you and learn how words link together, they begin to put two words together in small sentences and later they will use longer sentences.

As they get older, they start to use longer sentences. They will learn and use lots of new words and will talk about what they have done. They will start to ask lots of questions and enjoy listening to what others are saying. They find some sounds difficult to say, but most adults will understand them. All of these skills help children get ready for school.

But remember, learning to talk can be difficult

Some children find talking and listening harder than others. They might find it hard to understand what words and sentences mean. Some struggle to find the right words and sounds to use and

put them in order. These children may need extra help.

If you are worried about your child, talk to people you know and who know your child. The stages in this leaflet will help guide you but remember, every child is different and if you're still worried, go with your instinct. Talk to someone who

can help, for example a speech and language therapist, a health visitor or GP. You can also visit the I CAN website to find out more about communication and language in children – www.ican.org.uk.

In the meantime, to help get you started, follow the guidance and tips in this leaflet.



Ages and stages of a child's development

6 months

- Your baby watches your face when you talk to them.
- They play with sounds – you'll hear noises like 'bababa'.
- They are starting to understand when you say things as you do them like 'bye-bye' or 'up'.
- They love games like when you hide your face and then say 'boo!'

1 year

- Your baby will 'chat' to you and start to use some words anytime now.
- Their new words might not sound like adult words, but you'll know what they mean.
- They can do simple things if you ask them and gesture, like 'give it to Mummy'.
- They love being with you, watching what you do and you can take turns making noises to each other.

18 months

- Your toddler will be starting to use more and more words around 20 of them. Although they may not sound quite right, you know what they mean.
- They can find things you ask for like pictures in a book or toys in the room.
- They'll be using lots of babble and words and they may 'talk' when they are playing.
- They are starting to pretend as they play with things – like holding a brick to their ear and pretending it's a phone or drinking out of a toy cup.

2 years

- Children understand longer sentences like 'your shoes are upstairs'.
- They are starting to use lots of single words – 50 or more.
- They are starting to put some words together to make sentences, like 'teddy gone' or 'Daddy's ball'.
- They can play alongside other children. They might be starting to share, but it's quite hard for them.

3 years

- Children are using longer sentences, like, 'I'm gonna Nana's' or 'I'm gonna get a toy car'.
- Children may stumble over their words and repeat themselves.
- They are beginning to understand question words like 'who?', 'what?' and 'where?'
- They enjoy playing games with other children and know all about taking turns.

4 years

- What your child says can be understood even by people who don't know them well, but they might still find some sounds hard to make, like 'l', 'y', 'sh' and 'ch'.
- Children ask lots of questions, especially 'why...?'
- They are beginning to understand colour, number and time words like 'show me three fingers', 'we are going tomorrow'.
- They can use their words to tell you about how they are feeling and about their ideas.

Handy Tips

Talking and playing with your child is good for them and makes life easier for you. These simple tips will help.

Get your child's attention

Face your child or sit down with them. Say their name before you start speaking. Talk about something you can both see in front of you. This helps them to learn what words mean.

Have fun together

Use actions, sing, make noises and funny faces. Don't be shy, being a bit silly helps get their attention and makes them laugh.

Comments not questions

Asking lots of questions can feel like it's a test. Make it a conversation. Comment on what they are doing and what is happening.

Talk to your baby right from the start

Babies love to hear your voice and see your face when you talk to them.

Talking is easy

Just chat about what you are doing or what they are interested in.

Be aware of background noise

Music, noisy video games and the TV are a big part of our lives, but try to make some noise-free time so that your baby can hear what you are saying.

Give them time to think

Children need more time than adults to think about what they've heard, and to decide what to say back. Give them time to respond, and look at them while you wait.

Use simple language

Keep your sentences short. For example, "Food time now" or "Wow, you're building a tower".

Repeat what you say

It's good to say the same thing over again. Babies and toddlers need to hear words and sentences lots of times to understand them and learn new words.

Make it easier for them to listen

Turning the music, radio or TV off helps children focus on your words.

Build on what they say

Adding one or two words to what they say helps your child onto the next stage of talking. So, if your child says "bus" you say "Yes, big bus".

Speak in your home language

It's important for children to learn their first words and sentences in their

home language. Your child will learn in English later, at nursery and school.

Make it easier for them to talk

Dummies can get in the way of talking. Try to keep them just for sleep times. Take it out to talk.

Show them the right way

Young children often make mistakes. Show them that you understand, rather than asking them to repeat words correctly. Say the word or sentence again correctly for your child. If they say "Look at the dod", you can say "Yes, it's a dog".

Copy what they say

Repeat back sounds, words and sentences. Whether its "la la" or "Oh, you liked the banana?", it shows you're interested and that sounds and words are important.

Helping I CAN

I CAN exists solely to help children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) aged 0 to 19 find their voice.

SLCN disproportionately affects children and young people, being seven times more prevalent than autism: 1.4 million children have a language disorder they will not grow out of (Developmental Language Disorder) - that is two or three children in every single classroom! In some areas of high deprivation across the UK, as many as 50% of children start school without the language they need for learning (delayed language).

Our mission is that no child is left out, or left behind, because of a difficulty speaking or understanding. We deliver this mission through our specialist holistic package of support, including an advice line for parents and practitioners and evidence-based programmes for educational settings (i.e. nurseries, schools). We also run two specialist schools in Surrey and Nottinghamshire, and raise awareness of the issue, so it is better understood and addressed.

But we cannot do this on our own. It takes the commitment of all our staff, supporters, volunteers, donors and partners to make a difference. And you can help to! Simply visit the **Support Us** page of our website.

Thank you!

ican.org.uk/support-us

Useful I CAN resources

I CAN is the children's communication charity. We help children develop their speaking and listening skills with a range of resources for children of all ages.

Free resources

- Speak to a trained speech and language advisor about any concerns you have about your child's speech and language development – **020 7843 2544**

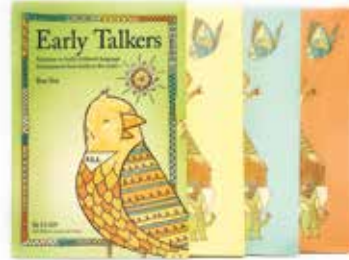
- Download a range of free resources from the I CAN website www.ican.org.uk
- Sign up to our newsletter to get regular updates about speech and language communication – www.ican.org.uk/register



Resources for Parents

- **Early Talkers Boxset**

A collection of fun activities, beautifully illustrated on durable cards to be played with babies from birth to five years old, to support their speech, language and communication development.



- **Ready Steady Talk**

A dynamic activity book of great games to help your child get ready for pre-school and beyond.



- **The Communication Cookbook**

An activity book brimming full of ideas and ingredients essential to children who have just started school.



- **Jake and Tizzy Books**

A collection of eight story books aimed at developing the reading and communication skills of 3-4 year olds.



Resources for Schools and Nurseries

- **Early Talk Toolkit**

A collection of I CAN, books, cards, posters and DVDs that a nursery / school can use in the daily business to help speech and language communication of 0-5 year olds.



- **Early Talk Boost**

A specialist, proven intervention aimed at helping 3-4 year olds with language delay.



- **Talk boost KS1**

A 10-week intervention focusing on 4-7 year olds with language delay.



These resources can be purchased from the I CAN website. To find out more, please visit www.ican.org.uk, email us at info@ican.org.uk or call us on 020 7843 2515

I CAN
Angel Gate
EC1V 2PT
E: info@ican.org.uk
T: 020 7843 2515

If you would like to support I CAN
to help children please visit –
www.ican.org.uk/support-us