

Speech & language
therapy

Combining words and saying phrases

Your child is using a wide range of social, object and action words so now you can encourage them to begin to string these words together into short phrases.

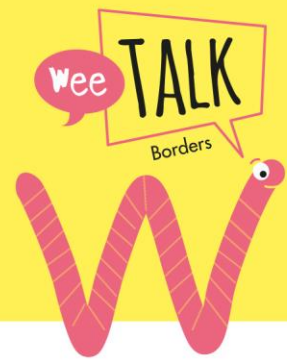
This pack contains some general strategies that you can do in everyday activities while talking to your child. Small changes in the way you talk to your child will significantly help to develop their language skills. Talk to your child during everyday activities, like getting dressed, in the bath, putting the shopping away, or going for a walk.

There are also some specific activity ideas that involve using everyday objects and toys and can be done at any time throughout the day for short periods of time. If your child is a little older they will be able to play for longer.

You don't need any special or expensive toys. Ensure there are no distractions, e.g. turn off the TV, and make sure your child is not too tired, so you can give your child your full attention and have fun together.

General strategies

- **Shortened Sentences** - keeping your language short when talking to your child gives them an easy model of language that they can copy. Make your language one word longer than their utterances, e.g. if they are using 1 word at a time, you use 2 words together.
- **Repeat, Repeat, Repeat** – repeat new words and phrases often and in different situations. The more a child hears a word or phrase, the more easily he will understand it and try to say it. Repeat the word or phrase several times in one short activity.
- **Commenting** – comment on what your child is doing i.e. talk as you play and do everyday things. Let your child hear the type of vocabulary and phrases you would use in different situations.
- **Modelling**- your child needs to hear a variety of phrases before he will start to copy them. Throughout the day model 2 words phrases, vary the types of words you use, e.g. noun + verb – “read book”, “eat cookie”; adjective + noun – “dirty boot”, “happy dog”; noun + preposition - “arm in”, “leg down.”



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- **Expanding** – build on what your child says by adding words to their utterance to show them how words fit together e.g. child says “bus” you say “yes, big bus.”

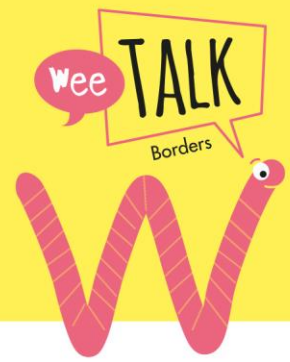
Don't worry about how clear your child's speech is. At this stage children use a limited range of speech sounds in their words. Just repeat back the words emphasising the correct pronunciation.

Don't expect your child to use word endings such as '-ing' or the 'little words' that build a complete sentence e.g. 'is/the/a'. These come in a later stage of development.

Activities and games to play

The following activities are only a few ideas for games. You will be able to think of lots more using toys that your child especially likes to play with.

- **hello/bye,bye + Name** - take advantage of any appropriate situations, e.g. meeting people, visiting, during play. When someone/something new appears or disappears say “Hello Daddy”, “Bye bye Teddy” etc. Make toys or puppets talk to your child – e.g. “Hello Luke” and encourage them to reply. Give your child a puppet, encouraging them to talk through the puppet.
- **more/please/all gone** - these words can be added to an object to give simple phrases:
When tidying away toys – “bricks gone”, “car gone.”
Food is finished – “juice gone”, “bread gone.”
Asking for more – “more milk”, “more bubbles.”
- **'wash' + body parts** - at bath time, name each body part as you are washing it e.g. “wash face”, “wash arm.” Ask “what's next?” or forget to wash one part and see if your child points it out.
- **person + action** - during any pretend play activities, encourage your child to describe what the person/animal is doing – either in play that your child is carrying out, or play that you model for your child e.g. “dolly drink”, “teddy eat”, “rabbit jump”, “baby cry.”

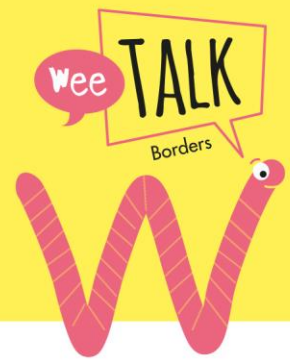


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- **Reading books together** - take turns with your child to describe what is happening in the pictures in your child's favourite books e.g. "Spot run", "Peppa sleep."
- **Playing a tidying-up game** - ask your child to tell you where things go e.g. "cup cupboard", "teddy toy box" etc. You could play a similar game when putting the shopping away, e.g. "milk fridge", "beans cupboard."
- **Outdoor play** - encourage your child to describe what they are doing in the garden or park. e.g. "mummy swing", "Jack slide", "Daddy climb."
- **Using miniature toys** - encourage your child to give you instructions involving objects and people e.g. with farm/zoo animals "food (to the) camel", "cow (to the) water", "horse jump".
- **Dressing game** - have your child practise using two-word combinations involving objects and people, with soft toys and their clothes e.g. "(give the) dress (to) teddy", "(give the) hat (to) Batman".

As your child uses more and more phrases, you can encourage him to use 3 word phrases. Continue as before, modelling and expanding but aim your language at 3 word phrases.

- **Using doll's house furniture or real furniture** - take turns to give instructions about where toy items (e.g. lego pieces, dolls, dinosaurs) should be placed e.g. "Teddy on chair", "Brick under table".
- **Kitchen activities** - such as setting the table, making dinner e.g. "Milk in cup", "Cornflakes in bowl", "Spoon on table."
- **Bath-time toys** e.g. "Boat on water", "Fish under water", "Bubbles on nose".
- **Use daily routines** and everyday activities to comment on what is happening. e.g. "Emma brushing teeth", "Mummy washing face",



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“Dog chase ball”, “Mummy kiss baby”, “Teddy eat apple”, “Daddy pop bubbles”.

Check out the parents sections in the following websites for lots more activity ideas and advice.

www.talkingpoint.org.uk www.ican.org.uk www.afasicengland.org.uk
www.afasicscotland.org.uk www.afasiccymru.org.uk
www.afasicnorthernireland.org.uk
www.literacytrust.org.uk www.hello.org.uk

**For more information on the Speech and Language Therapy Service
(including how to request support from us) please see:**

<http://www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/slt>

**[Check out our Wee Talk Borders Facebook page or you can call us on 01896
826710](#)**