



2 to 5 years: how to help your child's communication

Your relationship and interactions with your child are what's most important in helping their speech, language and communication develop.

You can support your child's communication by:

- talking to them about everyday activities and routines, for example "after we visit Granny, we will go to the shops"
- starting with a comment instead of a question so your child answers with more than just "yes" or "no" - instead of asking, "is that a sand castle?" say, "I see you are building a lovely sand castle. Tell me about it"
- having 10 minutes "special time" in which you play an activity that your child has chosen
- modelling correct grammar or pronunciation if your child makes a mistake such as saying "oh yes, the boy fell off the wall" if your child says "the boy falled off the wall" - it can help to repeat the correct word a few times
- repeating your child's sentences and adding extra words or new ideas - for example if your child says, "look at the tiger", you could say "oh wow, look at the stripy tiger. I wonder what he likes to eat"
- making up stories together – think of new and interesting characters and places
- playing word games and sound games like "words that start with b" and "words that rhyme with cat" and word meaning games, for example "name 5 animals"
- playing games like "Simon says" to help your child to understand and follow simple instructions
- reading books together and then talking about the story and what you think might happen next
- trying to limit screen time (Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/play/screen-time/>) to 1 hour per day

Find videos on helping your child to communicate (Link: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsQK32cdMW_ygwiXLtlu11owvqX8HctB)

Soothers

Aim to discontinue soother use. Soothers can lead to difficulties with your child's teeth and speech development.

Watch a video on connecting and communicating with your child

If your child is repeating sounds or words

It is very common to hear young children repeating sounds in words or whole words such as “m m m m mammy can I have juice” or “I I I I I want that”.

This is because your child's language is developing so quickly at this time.

You can help them by:

- listening to what your child has said and not how they have said it
- keeping eye contact and letting them know that they have lots of time to finish
- speaking slowly with your child and asking fewer questions
- reducing distractions, for example turning off the TV and radio and putting down your phone

Watch a video on helping a child who stammers

More in Communication development (Link: </babies-children/checks-milestones/communication-development/>)

0 to 12 months (Link: </babies-children/checks-milestones/communication-development/0-12-months/>)

12 to 24 months (Link: </babies-children/checks-milestones/communication-development/12-24-months/>)

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Screen time and young children (Link: </babies-children/play/screen-time/>)

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