

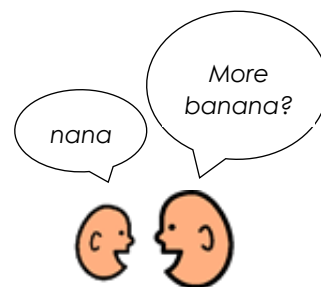
Joining words

Once your child is using enough single words, you can support them to combine words into short phrases. Don't worry about how clear your child's speech is at this stage. They may use a limited range of speech sounds or may miss off the ends of words. Focus on adding words and just repeat back how they should sound.

General strategies for joining words together:

- **Simple language.** Try to match your language to your child's level, plus one or two words. For example, if your child uses single words, use a two word phrase. Keeping your language short and simple provides a model that is easier to copy.

Try to use more comments than questions as you play together, and make comments during your everyday routines.



- **Pause and wait.** Your child may need [extra time](#) to organise their thoughts and plan what they are going to say. Pause and wait for your child to speak first. Slow down your own talking and give your child plenty of thinking time.



- **Copy and add.** Repeat what your child says, and add a word to extend it.

e.g. Child: 'Car.'
Adult: 'Yes, blue car.' or 'Daddy's car'.

- **Repeat.** Use repetition to emphasise the words you are modelling.

e.g. Child: 'Bubble.'
Adult: 'Bubbles! More bubbles? Ok, more bubbles.
Ready... yay, more bubbles!'



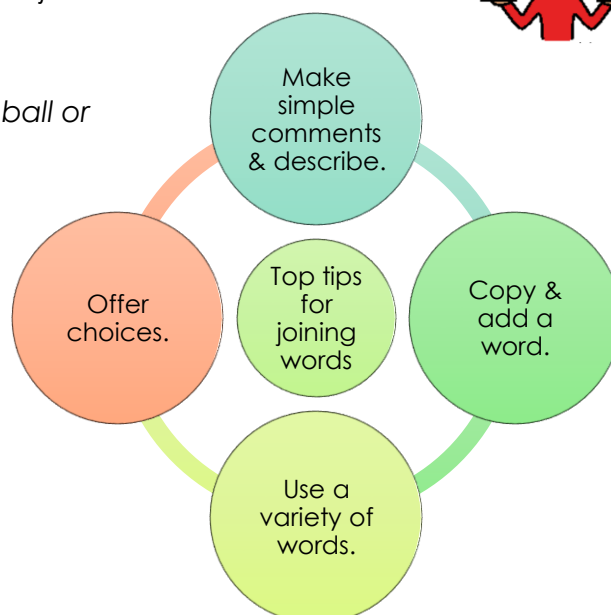
- **Offer choices.** Model two words together when offering choices.

e.g. Child: 'Juice.'
Adult: 'Do you want... apple juice or orange juice?'

Child: 'Ball.'
Adult: 'Will we... throw the ball or roll the ball?'



See BBC's [Tiny Happy People](#) to find out more about adding words to build sentences



- Model a **variety** of words. As well as object names, we need different kinds of words to be able to combine words together.

Action words – *want, eat, drink, sleep, run, wash, etc.*

e.g. Child: 'Bubbles.'

Adult: 'Blow bubbles.' Or 'Pop bubbles'.

Describing words – *big, yellow, hot, cold, dirty, etc.*

Number words – *no, more, all-gone*

Position words – *in, on, up, down, etc.*

Social words – *hi, bye-bye, night-night, etc.*

People's names – *Mummy's, my, Peppa, etc.*

