

BATH TIME

Routines are one of the most effective ways to build language skills, with lots of predictability, repetition and contextualisation, and bath time is a perfect example of this. Bath time is a great time to provide one-to-one, face-to-face language enrichment with a captive audience, and it's already a part of your day. Make the most of this multisensory experience which provides opportunities for developing a whole host of different language skills.

What can we talk about in the bath?

- **Model new vocabulary** – use your time in the tub to expand your child's vocabulary. This can be adapted to meet your child's current level of development. You can model verbs while you're carrying out the actions, e.g. washing, drying, pouring, splashing, blowing bubbles, filling, emptying, pulling/pushing the plug, floating, sinking, capsizing.

Try to use lots of descriptive language,
e.g. slippery bath, shiny taps, damp mat, fluffy towel, tiny duck etc.

- **Demonstrate concept words in context** – you can explore key early concept words like wet/dry, full/empty and hot/cold, and use bath toys to take this further for example by exploring same/different, big/little, light/heavy.

- **Talk about prepositions and location vocabulary** – use bath toys or everyday objects to illustrate preposition words such as:

in - “the water is **in** the bath”

on - “the duck is **on** the water”

under - “the soap is **under** the water”

next to - “the shampoo is **next to** the taps”

behind - “the sponge is **behind** you”

- **Offer choices** – encourage more talking by asking your child to choose, for example, “do you want the blue towel or the white towel?”
- **Follow your child's lead and expand their utterances** – use your one-to-one time with your child by giving them a good model for how they can extend the language they are already using by combining more words. You can repeat what your child says and try to extend their utterance by adding more words, e.g. if your child says “bubbles” you could say “yes, big bubbles”, or if they say “boat sinking” you could say “the boat is sinking under the water”.
- **Use commentary talking** - talk about what you are doing and what your child is doing while the actions are happening to provide good quality models of language.

- **Follow a sequence** – bath time is full of routines, and you can use this to help your child learn sequencing language e.g. first/next/then/last. Follow the same sequence every time and see if your child can help tell you what you need to do next.
- **Sing while you shower** – we all know that everyone’s singing sounds better in the bathroom. Using rhythmic, rhyming and repetitive sounds and language helps to consolidate learning of words, grammatical structures and development of phonological awareness skills (all of which underpin literacy development!).
- **Play a prediction game** – develop inferencing and verbal reasoning skills by using bath time to make predictions. Gather up some waterproof toys and see which ones will float or sink, or whether they will make a big splash or little splash. Once your child has got the hang of this you can ask your child ‘why?’ questions, or even use the opportunity to consolidate some of their assessment vocabulary if they are a little older, e.g. describe, explain, compare.