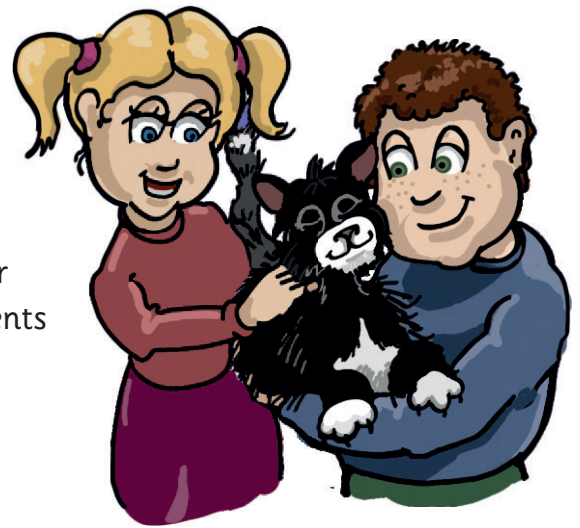


Encouraging Talking



Research has shown that parents are not responsible for children's speech or language difficulties. However parents can make a big difference to their child's language development by changing the way they talk and listen to their child.

Here are some ways you can help:

Encourage: Encourage all your child's attempts to communicate. Talking is just one way. Actions, pointing, pulling faces and even crying are all ways in which a child can tell you something.

Listen: Watch your child carefully and listen to him or her. Give your child plenty of time to say something in whatever way he or she can.

Time: Give your child plenty of time to talk. Try not to jump in with questions. A direct question puts a child under pressure to give an answer. This can make the child feel very uncomfortable. If you pause your child will often try to fill the pauses.

Choices: Give your child choices to encourage them to use words. Instead of asking 'Do you want juice?' Try asking 'What do you want to drink, juice or milk?'

Expand: Expand what your child says to give him or her a good model, e.g. child: 'That pig' adult: 'Yes, we used the pink paper to make the pig...'

Copy back: Try to repeat back your child's sounds, words or actions. This shows him or her that you have understood and encourages him or her to try again.

Provide a good model: If your child makes a mistake give them a good model of what they are trying to say, e.g. child: 'Him runned fast', adult: 'Yes, he ran very fast'.

Explain: Explain the meaning of new words as you go along. A child needs to hear new words lots and lots of times in different contexts and situations before he or she will remember the word and use it.