

COMMUNICATION



EARLY COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Attention
- Sharing
- Gesture
- Imitation
- Following Social Routines
- Turn – taking and waiting
- Eye contact
- Facial Expression
- Listening
- Play skills

TIPS TO SUPPORT EARLY COMMUNICATION

- **Follow the child's lead** in interactions & play
- **Get down to their level** to allow them to look at your face while talking
- Offer choices
- Keep your language **simple** & grammatically **correct**
- Model language **one step above child's current level** sentences
- When your child speaks to you, **repeat** what the child said and then **expand** upon it.
- Use **familiar routines** as an opportunity to teach language.
- **Describe** what you are doing and **commentate** on what your child is doing during interactions

-
- Allow opportunities for **turn taking** in conversation and play
 - **Imitate** any language your child uses. This encourages them to in turn, imitate your language.
 - Expand your child's utterances by taking what the child said and **adding grammatical or semantic detail** to increase complexity.
 - Take what the child says and **expand it into a different category**. An example of this would be when the child says "hat off," recast the utterance into a question, "Is the hat off your head?"

You can incorporate these strategies into daily routines e.g. getting dressed, having a bath, eating dinner, but it is sometimes helpful to set aside 5 minutes per day where you sit on the floor with your child and try these strategies with them as they play with a toy of their choice.

Remember! Interaction between you and your child should be fun. Avoid being too directive and corrective. Be patient, praise all positive communication attempts regardless of whether they are correct or not.

Written by: Ms Sinead Carr (Speech & Language Therapist)