



What can I do to help my child to speak?

Here are some general rules for supporting communication with a child with hearing difficulties:

- Use a clear voice but don't shout
- Try not to speak too fast
- Don't exaggerate mouth movements as natural speech is a lot easier for children to lip-read
- Ensure you are face-to-face when you speak with your child and close to them. If they are playing on the floor, get down on the floor with them. If they are sitting at the table, sit with them. Crouch down when you speak to them so you are face-to-face. Try not to turn away or start doing something else when you are talking to them and try not to cover your mouth with your hand when you speak.
- Make sure rooms are light and bright. Try to make sure your face is not in shadow so preferably sit so the light from a light or window is lighting up your face rather than having a light source behind you.
- Reduce background noise by turning the TV or radio off if you are not listening to them, this is especially important when you are telling your child something or telling them a story.
- If you watch TV, try to limit TV watching and when s/he does watch, watch it together. Comment on what is happening and tie it into your day-to-day experiences e.g. if there is a dolly on TV, you could find their dolly afterwards.
- Show them where sounds are coming from
- Use musical toys e.g. musical instruments, noisy toys and make noises in play e.g. choo choo for a train and 'sh' for baby sleeping.
- Sing songs and rhymes with your child – sit face-to-face and, where possible, with your child on your knees so they can feel the rhythm, of the songs as well
- Tell them names of toys and describe what you are doing, use simple repetitive language and an interesting voice
- Use facial expression, pointing and natural gestures
- Repeat sounds they make and early words they say
- Read stories and look at books together
- As with any child, your child will enjoy a range of toys (e.g. dollies, building, creative play, puzzles) and will enjoy having your undivided attention.

Make sure everyone who the child spends time with is aware of the above so everyone knows the best things to do e.g. nursery/school, grandparents, friends.

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