



VERBAL COMMUNICATION TIPSHEET – PART TWO

CREATE REASONS FOR YOUR CHILD TO COMMUNICATE

Creating reasons for your child to communicate encourages them to use the language skills (words, gestures and sounds) they already have throughout their day. Below are some suggested ways to create reasons for your child to use their language:

Wait for your child to ask for things they need and want:

- Wait for your child to tell you (or show if they are not using words yet) that they want something rather than 'guessing' what they want.

Example: *Wait for your child to ask you for a glass of milk rather than getting it for them because you know they always want milk after their sleep. They might do this by asking, "Milk?", taking you to the fridge, or bringing you their cup.*

Make favourite items harder to access:

- Put some of your child's favourite or frequently used items out of reach so that they need to ask for them.

Example: *Put your child's favourite toys or foods on a shelf they can't reach, in see-through containers and/or containers they can't open independently so they need to ask for help.*

Leave out or exchange an essential item:

- Leave one essential item out of a familiar routine or exchange it with an inappropriate item so your child needs to tell you something is wrong.

Example: *Give your child a fork to eat yoghurt with, or start to put their shoes on without first putting their socks on.*

Leave out a step in a routine:

- Leave an essential step out of a familiar routine and then wait for your child to tell you something is wrong.

Example: *You could put soap on your child's hands and 'forget' to turn the tap on to wash the soap off, forget a step in a familiar song, forget to put toothpaste on your child's toothbrush.*

Add a 'silly' action to a game or routine:

Do something silly during a routine to give your child the opportunity to tell you something is funny or out of place.

Example: *Hide part of a snack or meal and pretend to have eaten it, pretend to write with a spoon or put a shoe on your head instead of their foot.*

** These are examples only and do not replace professional advice, if you have concerns about your child's communication skills, it is important to consult a speech pathologist