



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

At The Reginald Mitchell Primary School we recognise the importance of Speech, Language and Communication as an essential skill for learning and building friendships.

However, around 10% of children actually start school with a speech, language or communication difficulty, which if not identified early enough, can have a detrimental effect on future achievement. Lack of intervention can especially impact on phonics and literacy development, but often also leads to long term difficulties with employability and wellbeing. We work closely with Debbie Wilshaw from SpeakWrite to ensure our Early Years staff are able to identify those children who may require clinical assessment for Speech and Language, whether it be difficulties with articulation, receptive language, expressive language or social use of language. Debbie uses non-diagnostic Language Progression Assessments to help us establish any areas that may need additional school-based intervention. These also help us identify any children who we feel would benefit from further clinical assessment with our local NHS team of therapists or other external agencies. For those children that require referrals, we are always happy to continue and extend work given by the therapists. We also provide a range of additional intervention groups or 1:1 support to work on strategies such as:

- Cued Articulation
- Nursery Narratives
- Helicopter Stories
- Attention and Listening Groups
 - Attention Autism Groups
 - Colourful Semantics

How can you support your child at home?

Giving your child the best start with speech, language and communication development should above all, be fun! Face to face interaction with another human being is essential for a child to develop listening skills, the ability to take turns, to understand facial expressions, and to understand gesture and intonation are all essential for their future learning success. Screen time has its value too, but to support your child's progress nothing beats the time you can give to talk and share stories with your child. Here are just a few ideas to support early language development:



Ditch the Dummy!

Try to encourage removal of dummies and bottles by the age of one as this can really impact on the child's ability to produce different sounds. Speech can become very unclear and may require therapy to help correct.

Sound Awareness

Helping your child to recognise different sounds will really help when they come to recognising phonics.

Play games or read books that require you to make different animal or vehicle sounds for them to recognise.

Play I spy games whilst you are in the car or out and about. Ask them "Can you see something beginning with the /t/ sound?"

Have a sound hunt around the house - tell them to "find me 5 things that begin with a /b/ sound".



Rhymes and Songs

Sing as many rhymes and songs as you can as this really helps with recognising sound patterns and allows them to listen carefully to the beginnings and ends of words.

Clap The Syllables

Clap out the syllables in words to help identify different sounds.
Don- key = two claps



Reading

Schools are always trying to encourage children to do more reading. It really is essential to share stories and books as soon as you can, a child is never too young to have you read to them or talk about pictures!

Don't be worried if you are not a confident reader yourself, making up your own stories is just as good. This helps them to hear more words so increases their vocabulary, it also provides you with opportunities to ask questions about the story to help build understanding.



Asking 'wh' Questions

Asking WH questions like who, what doing, what, where, when and why are vital for both receptive and expressive language skills. Having a sound understanding of language will really help when it comes to writing and reading.



Games

Role play or games, provide endless opportunities for shared engagement to help develop listening and turn taking skills, all essential for learning and progression. You don't need to invest in expensive games, a simple Teddy Bears picnic, or tractors in the sand pit are great activities and again give you that face to face interaction that your child needs to support their speech and language development.

Having word challenges is a fun way to build up understanding of word categories and extend vocabulary.

'Name five things' can be played anywhere.

Give them a category, for example 'Farm animals' and see who can name five farm animals the fastest.

Make the categories harder for older children.



Modelling

Always try to use a nice clear voice when speaking to your child. Model back phrases or words that they don't quite say correctly. Never ask them to repeat things 'properly', simply modelling it correctly will help, or maybe just clarifying "Did you mean...".

Gesture or Visuals

Using gesture, such as pointing to an object that you are naming or miming and action can really help support understanding.

Some children may also benefit from symbol or picture visuals to support understanding.



Don't forget all children develop at different rates, but if you have any concerns regarding your child's speech, language or communication development, please do speak to their class teacher.



You may also wish to refer to the following organisations for further information;



Supporting language for literacy. Debbie Wilshaw Tel: 07941 865743



I can Talking Point for information regarding chronological development of speech, language and communication.

<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>



A National Charity supporting communication needs.

<https://www.afasic.org.uk>



National Autistic Society

<https://www.autism.org.uk>

