

Speak your feelings

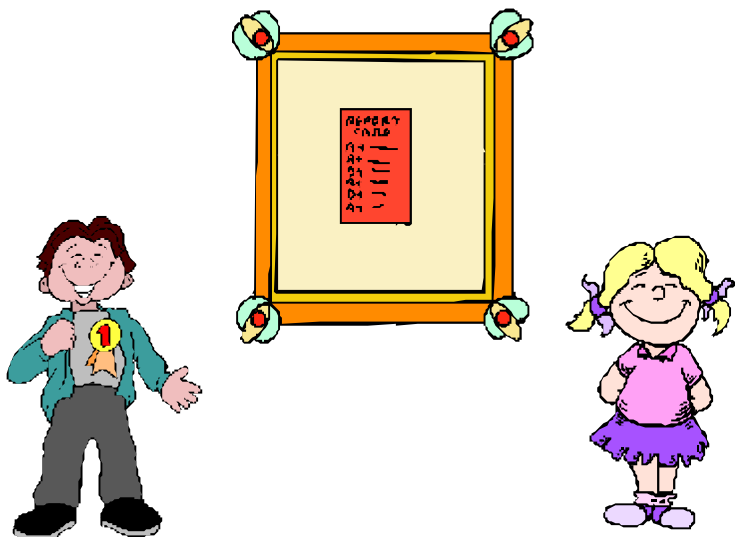
It is important for children to be able to express how they feel. The inability to do this can lead to behavioural problems. They might become withdrawn or aggressive if they are unable to talk about what is upsetting or worrying them.



Talk with your child about how **you** feel in certain situations: *'That man has made me very angry because he has taken my parking space. It must be awful to be in such a hurry that it makes you rude!'* Encourage them to speak about their feelings and know that **everyone** feels happy, sad, fed-up, grumpy and bored from time to time.

It's the way you say it!

The way we speak and what we say can have profound effects upon children's self-esteem and how they view themselves as learners. *'You're no good at maths,' 'You always find that difficult,' 'At least you tried'* are all put-downs that will convince a child that they are not clever. *'Go on, you can do it!'* *'Let's see what we can do to stop you getting mixed up,' 'We're getting there!'* are much more positive. When you talk with your child, try to use the language of success or language that makes all things seem possible.



Take Time to Talk!



Some ideas for parents and carers

Presented by Lancashire Literacy Team

Why is talk important?

Learning to communicate from a young age will give your child a flying start when it comes to education. Speaking, listening and interaction between you and your children will develop the skills they need for both learning and socialising with other children and teachers.

Children are actively encouraged in school to discuss their work, explore ideas and talk about how they learn. Life is so busy that sometimes it is difficult to find time to talk, and because of this, there is a growing concern that many children are entering school without the communication skills they need.

It takes skill to talk!

Just as children have to be taught to how read and write, they have to be shown how to talk and how to listen. Children need to understand not just what is being talked about, but how to join in and the type of language which is right for the situation - formal, friendly, loving, respectful, quiet, loud. Body language is also vital for good communication. Eye-contact, nodding in agreement and stressing points with gestures, are skills children need to learn.



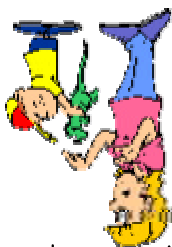
Tone is the way in which something is said. It can be friendly, teasing, aggressive, rude or dismissive. Many children find it difficult to adopt the right tone and need to be shown. Good talkers are also good listeners. Concentrating on what others are saying and commenting, extending, disagreeing or agreeing in constructive ways are also important skills and essential for conversation.

It takes two (or more) to talk!

There's lot of talk on television, and computer games often have a running commentary, too. So why don't these sources of language give children the speaking and listening skills they need? Because there is no interaction between the child and the characters; no eye-contact, no acknowledgement of what each has said; no reciprocal body-language; no questioning or answering. Television, computers and busy parents are often blamed for children's lack of communication skills. However, watching television with your child can provide opportunities for you to talk to each other.



While watching a favourite video or TV programme, talk about what is happening to the characters and how your children might feel in a similar situation. Help your children with the words that they need to express their feelings. Make predictions about what might happen and see who's right! What do each of you think the character should do? What would you do? Why? Look at the adverts and talk about the tricks the advertisers are using to make you buy their products.



Questions, questions, questions!

We ask questions all the time but did you know that questions are really useful in helping your children to develop their communication skills?

It's very easy to ask a question that will have 'Yes' or 'No' as the answer, but changing it slightly will mean that your child has to respond more fully.

'Have you done your homework?' 'Yes' or 'No' are all that is required. 'Tell me about the homework that you have been doing today. What did you find difficult? What was easy?' will need much fuller answers. Ask questions about the characters and stories or information in your child's reading book. *'What have learned from your book about insects?'*



Telling Tales

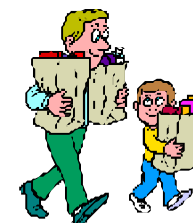
Do you remember any stories that your parents or grandparents told you about when they were little? Did they make you laugh or feel sad? Was there anything in the story that just could not happen today? Tell your child these stories, and stories about your own childhood - the day you ran away from home; the day you shaved the dog; the time you stole your father's cigarettes and made yourself very, very sick in the garden shed! Ask your child to tell you something that they remember from when they were very little.

Sharing these stories gives your child a sense of family history. They also provide lots of ideas for story writing in school. Children can only write what they can say!



Chatty chores!

Shopping trips can provide lots of opportunities for talk. Just think of all the places that the food in the supermarket comes from! Talk with your child about where these places are and what it might be like there. *'How far has this banana travelled to get here? What would it say if it could talk?'* The supermarket is also a place to talk about weight measurements and money in a real-life situation.



When you are cooking, talk with your children about what you are doing. Ask them to describe the taste of their food and why they like or dislike it.

If housework is getting you down, sing nursery rhymes and pop songs together, or make up silly dusting and vacuuming songs! Talk with your children when driving in the car. *'Who do you think lives in there? What do you think they are like? Where do you think the people in that car are going?'*

