

Top Tips for Talking

Helpful ways to interact with children throughout the EYFS

- **Follow the child's lead.**
Letting her choose what she wants to play with will motivate her to communicate. Children show preferences from birth.
- **Be interested in what he is doing.**
Match body position by being at the same level. Naming actions builds the vocabulary for verbs.
- **Wait.**
Pause to decide whether to respond straight away.
- **Listen and watch.**
Children need pauses as thinking spaces.
- **Choose your response.**
Build on what the child has said. Repeat back adding a word or two. Model the correct form without correcting.
- **Be playful and have fun.**
Play with sounds and words, imitating and repeating words and rhythms. Join-in with playful sounds, such as vehicles and animals.
- **Use gestures, signs, facial expression and tone of voice.**
Communicate actively to engage children, but in a gentle way with babies.
- **Be careful with questions.**
Comment by describing what the child is doing, wonder aloud, show your interest in short phrases. Aim for 4 comments to 1 question.
- **Questions need to support thinking.**
Be aware that early talkers do not have concepts of shape, space, colour etc and these questions interrupt thinking and learning. Questions that enable children become more independent, predict what might happen and plan their play are helpful.

Some points to remember.....

- Babies will respond from birth. Leave pauses, maintain eye contact and listen out for the baby's voice.
- As we ask fewer questions we need to make sure those we do ask are supporting learning and extending thinking.
- Talking and interacting are the building blocks of warm relationships. The more the child enjoys the relationship the more they will be motivated to communicate.