

## Early Expressive Language

### Description:

Your child has difficulties with their talking. This means:

- They are not using as many words as they should. For example they may just be making noises and not using any meaningful words.
- Your child may be using some words but we want to encourage them to use more e.g. they may say “car” and we would encourage them to say something like “big car”.



### How can I help at home?

1. Be on the same level as your child when you are communicating with him/her. This refers to:
  - The same physical level e.g. if he/she is lying on the floor– you lie on the floor; if the child is sitting on a chair– sit on a small chair as well.
  - The same language level– therefore you need to use short, simple, repetitive words or sentences, emphasising the key words when communicating with your child.

### 2. Follow your child’s lead.

Communicate with him/her about what he/she is focussing on and focus on his/her interests within an activity.

### Try the following techniques

- Watch what your child is interested in,
- Wait to see if he/she attempts to communicate (wait for up to 10 seconds– this is a long time and will feel strange to begin with) to see if he/she makes any attempts at communication; (try to let the child take the first turn),
- Respond to any communication attempt, you may need to interpret their message.

### Be face-to face

3. Imitate: Copy your child’s actions, facial expressions, sounds, gestures, words etc. this is an excellent way to encourage your child to allow you to enter his/her play/ activity.
4. Interpret: Treat any sound, facial expression or gesture as if it was an attempt at communication. Copy it back to your child and give it meaning e.g. when your child looks at something, points and makes a sound to indicate that he/she wants it.
5. Comment: Comment on what your child is doing e.g. if he/she is splashing in water you say “splash” at appropriate times.  
If he/she is making up and down movements with a paintbrush you say “up”/ “down” as appropriate– this will be more meaningful for your child as you are commenting on what he/she is doing.
6. Avoid asking your child to say words.