

Early Sentence Users: 2 -3 years old

Social Interaction

- Likes to play near other children but not with them.
- Copies familiar routines e.g. pretends to mop the floor.
- Towards 3 years: Wants adults and other children to join in but doesn't like them to take the lead.
- Enjoys sequences of pretend play – kisses doll, puts doll in cot, puts cover on, rocks cot.
- Begins to express feelings with words e.g. "Dylan's sad".

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Provide the words for the child's feelings and experiences e.g. "you're sad because..."

WHAT NEXT?:

Practising taking turns helps with sharing and social skills. You can signal this by saying "My turn" and "your turn".

Listening and Understanding

- Enjoys listening to short stories with pictures.
- Needs adults help to listen e.g. "Toby, look at me".
- Understands simple instructions e.g. "put your hat in the bag" "where's mummy's coat?" (2 and 3 parts)
- Understands simple questions e.g. "who" "where", "what".
- Towards 3 years: understands simple concepts e.g. "under", "big".

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Give children extra time to respond. Support their attention and listening skills by saying their name before you give an instruction.

WHAT NEXT?:

Support understanding of longer instructions by breaking them down into smaller steps.

Talking/Expressive Language

- Learns new words all the time.
- Uses 2-3 word phrases e.g. "man run" "mummy singing".
- Towards 3 years: uses 3 or more word phrases e.g. "the baby's holding the teddy" "me falled over".
- Asks questions - "who", "what's that", "where".
- Uses negatives e.g. "can't", "won't"
- Uses simple action words e.g. run, fall, jump, drink, catch.
- Attempts to join in short conversation - responds to what adults say a few times.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Repeat words and build sentences e.g. child says "mummy gone?", you say "yes, mummy's gone to work".

WHAT NEXT?:

Talk about what you're doing as you're doing it e.g. "I'm washing the dishes. I'm squeezing the soap into the warm water".

Speech Sounds

- Can be understood by people outside of the family 50% of the time.
- Uses sounds m, p, b, t, d, s, f, (k, g, sh are developing) and complex vowels.
- Still misses out sounds and substitutes others e.g. "tup" for cup.
- May have difficulty saying l, s, f, sh, ch, j, cr, pl, sn, r, th, these are still developing.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

If children say a word that isn't quite right, say it back to them the right way e.g. they say "tup", you say "yes, it's a big cup!"

WHAT NEXT?:

Use lots of words when speaking to children so that they can hear the sounds said correctly. Have quiet times when children can hear your voice without background noise. This will really help their speech development

Play and Social Development

- Engages in complex pretend play based on what they have seen e.g. playing shopping games, washing up, cooking, building, driving the bus. Moving towards co-operative play, where they can play together with another child.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Try pretend role play with children to expand their imagination. Add an idea to the game!

WHAT NEXT?:

Take turns when playing games with children to support their communication skills e.g. say "My turn", "your turn".



Want some more ideas and activities to support your child's communication? Take a look at our resources on Halton's Communication Hub

