

Understanding and Using Single Words

Children often need help to learn and say their first words.

- Position yourself at your child's eye level in order to gain and keep their attention.
- Focus on developing language skills when your child is not tired or hungry.
- Try to remove other distractions, such as the TV and other toys, when trying to teach your child a new word.
- Talk about what is in front of your child and not what you are planning to do later.
- Using simple signs/gestures alongside talking can help your child learn a word.
- Use single words and repeat the word several times.
- Leave pauses after you have said each word to give your child time to copy it.
- Choose items that your child already shows interest in to teach them its name.
- Give simple choices during the day and emphasise the key word in the sentence. *'Do you want a banana or an apple?'.*
- Try not to guess your child's needs before they are aware that they need something.
- Simple nursery rhymes and songs can help children learn single words or noises.
- Give your child time to finish simple repeated phrases, before completing them yourself e.g. *'ready steadygo'*.
- Use simple picture books and name the items in the book.
- Put some key items in a bag and pull them out one at a time for your child to listen to the name of the item and then play with it briefly.
- When completing everyday routines use simple words such as *'up,up,up'* as you walk up the stairs and body parts as you get the child dressed or washed.
- Demonstrate simple symbolic noises such as *'brumm, brumm'* for a car and *'weeeee'* as they go down the slide.
- Toys to use to help communication:
 - Bubbles – ready steady go
 - Insert puzzles
 - Books
 - Toy animals
 - Balls

