

Commenting

Questions are important and they do have their place. However, it is important in the early stages of communication development that children hear good models of language structures and vocabulary. So, avoid asking your child questions during their play and make comments about what they are doing instead.

What do I need to do?

- **Show interest** in what your child is doing, this will encourage them to make more attempts of communication.
- **Model language** and use words relevant to their play, this shows the child how to talk about what they are doing.
- **Avoid asking questions** during, play such as “what is this?”, “what colour is it?”, “where...?”, “how many...?”.
- **Instead, say a word or a few words** that are important to the child at the time – comment on something they are looking at or doing.
- **Describe (with a few words only) what is around you** – what you can see, what you can hear etc. And remember to **wait**, children will often start to fill in the gap.



How?

Don't ask too many questions. Instead, COMMENT on what the child is doing rather than interrupting their play.

E.g., “dolly’s having a drink” NOT “what is dolly doing?”

Putting it into practise

- **Join in with the play**, this allows the child to choose what they want to communicate about and express themselves in their own way.
- **Comment and talk** about what they are doing, this will keep the interaction going.
- **Avoid the temptation to ask** your little one what they are doing – **this helps them to concentrate on their own play** rather than answering the question.
- A useful phrase to use is, “**I wonder...**” For example, “**I wonder what’s for dinner today...**” or “**I wonder what you’re going to play with today...**”

For further ideas check out the videos below.



Moving forward...

When you feel you are confident with this strategy, next, try focussing on **repetition**. Repeating words and phrases helps a child’s brain to make connections between words and objects. **Children love to hear the same stories and songs over and over again**, this is because the more they experience something the stronger those connections become.