

What should my child be able to do?

By the age of four years, your child:

- Asks “who”, “what”, “where” and “why” questions
- Uses many words (about 900), usually in four to five word sentences, such as “I want biscuit Mummy” and “I want to go park Daddy”
- Can use words like “and” to link up sentences, such as “I go shops and get icecream”
- Uses four to five words in sentences
- Understands shape and colour names
- Understands some ‘time words’, such as “lunch time”, “summer”, “today”
- Use correct grammar, with some mistakes, such as “I brokeed it”
- Can be understood most of the time by most people, but their speech may be less clear if they are tired, unwell, or excited.
- Will attempt the sounds s, z, sh, ch, l, j, f

By the age of five years, your child:

- Understands opposites, such as, “big, little”, “high, low”, “wet, dry”
- Can explain the function of some objects, for example, “The knife cuts the bread”
- Talks about experiences at kinder, friends’ homes, etc.
- Explains why something happened, for example, “Mum went to the shops because the milk ran out”
- Tells you how they feel and shares their ideas
- Enjoys rhyming and rhythms
- Uses about 6 words in sentences, with mostly correct grammar
- Talks about events in the past, present, and future
- Is becoming interested in writing and reading things
- Speaks clearly enough to be understood by strangers

By the age of six years, your child:

- Continues to understand and use more and more words
- Accurately retells a story
- Communicates easily with both adults and other children
- Uses correct grammar most of the time
- Names the days of the week
- Says most sounds clearly, and attempts sounds v, th, and r but may still make some errors

Strategies to encourage communication with your child.

Read books with your child

- Let your child choose a book.
- **Point** and **talk** about the pictures together
- **Listen** and **expand** on what your child says (e.g. that's a cat → Yes the fluffy cat is scratching with its sharp claws)
- Focus on telling the story together rather than asking a lot of questions. Ask them to **predict** what might happen next in the story.
- **Explain** new or tricky words. Relate it to their experience/knowledge and show them how to use it in another sentence

Talk with your child

It sounds simple but with our busy lives it is important to take time to talk to your child and model language. We learn to be a good talker through talking, particularly to our parents!

- **Show** your child how to use words and sentences correctly. Remember if they can't say the sentence correctly they won't be able to write it!
 - "teddy in the box", you could model back "*The teddy is inside the box*".
 - "Her is hungry", you could model back "*She is hungry*".
- **Expand** what your child says adding some words. This will help them to learn to produce longer, more complex sentences.
 - If your child says "A dog", you could expand that to "A *tiny, friendly dog*".
- **Show** your child how to use new words and what they mean.
 - If your child is helping you make a cake you can talk about and show them new words like 'stirring', 'mixing', 'pouring', 'baking', 'measuring'.
- **Use** descriptive words describing how you or others feel (emotions) and how things feel or look (texture- e.g. smooth, rough, look- e.g. shiny, sparkly).
 - You can play 'Eye Spy/Guess Who' games giving clues about what something looks, feels, smells like, what type of thing category (e.g. I spy something that is a type of food you eat for desert. It tastes sweet. It is brown and smooth and melts when it gets hot → chocolate). You can give clues and then get them to have a go.

Screen time

- The recommendation for school-age children is to limit screen time for entertainment to **less than 2 hours per day**.
- To get more out of screen time watch the show with your child and talk to them about what is happening, what they think might happen next, how the character feels.
- Apps - children learn to talk and listen by talking with people not watching a screen. You need to be sharing the app and talking to your child to get any potential benefit.
- ibooks – Research shows children will get more communication benefits from reading real books than screen time with ibooks.

OUR VALUES: Collaboration: Openness Respect Empowerment