



## HELPING YOUR CHILD TO SPEAK AND LISTEN

### *Talking with your child*

Regularly talking and interacting with your child extends their language and listening skills, and helps grow their confidence with language.

Include your child when discussing everyday activities such as grocery shopping, gardening, cooking dinner, collecting mail from the mailbox, doing housework, and travelling in the car or bus.

Outings can also provide a world of new vocabulary. Discussion during outings can enrich your child's understanding of the world. Outings might include going to the park, the zoo, a shopping centre, museums, libraries and art galleries.

### **Other fun activities can include:**

- » Share rhymes, poems and songs. Encourage your child to join in.
- » Share and talk about family histories and family photos.
- » Look at picture books or art books. Ask your child to describe what is happening in the pictures and make up stories together.
- » Collect cardboard and other household items for your child to build with. Ask your child to describe what they are building.
- » Look at 'junk mail' and talk about the things for sale.
- » Listen to simple radio programs or podcasts together and discuss the content.

- » Play vocabulary games with your child such as, “what’s the opposite of ....?” (for example, “what’s the opposite of big?”) and “what’s another word for....?” (for example, “what’s another word for angry?”).

### ***Oral storytelling***

Storytelling is a great way to extend your child’s speaking and listening skills, and to expand their memory and imagination. Either you can tell the story, or you can encourage your child to tell the story.

#### **Storytelling might be about:**

- » your child’s favourite toy
- » another family member
- » a pet
- » a favourite fictional character from a book or television program
- » a famous person
- » the work of people from different professions, such as astronauts, firefighters, nurses and teachers
- » an imaginary world with imaginary characters
- » an imaginary animal that can speak.

#### **Here are some tips to start your storytelling:**

- » Make it exciting, with different voices, puppets, or a finger play.
- » Have a dress-up box for your child to use for storytelling and imaginative play.
- » Start with what interests your child.
- » Start by creating a character and a setting.



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### *Talking to your child*

As your child moves through primary school, they will speak with greater fluency and with a greater knowledge of the world.

#### **Some tips to foster more fluent speaking include:**

- » Continue to involve your child when discussing everyday activities, such as grocery shopping, gardening, cooking dinner, collecting mail from the mailbox, doing house work, and travelling in the car or bus.
- » Try to ask your child specific questions about their day. A general question like "how was your day?" will likely get a single-word response of "good." Ask specific questions like "what is the book you are reading in class about?" or "what did you do at lunchtime today?"
- » Involve your child in your discussions about the day's events or current events. Ask their opinion. This helps them understand different perspectives and increases their vocabulary.
- » Show a genuine interest in your child's reading, writing and viewing of all types of texts. Talking about texts can create meaningful discussions and help your child see them as important.
- » Show interest in topics your child is studying at school. These can be a great springboard into discussions.

- » Encourage your child to discuss their everyday problems and feelings.
- » Use questions and discussion to explore other people's feelings. This will help your child to develop empathy for others.
- » Use questions and discussion to broaden your child's experience and knowledge of the world, particularly during new experiences or on outings.

### ***Discussing news and current events***

As your child gets older, they become more aware of news and current events. Discussing news and current events can enrich your child's understanding of the world.

Questions are an effective way to encourage your child to think critically about an event and can help foster empathy. Questions also help your child to develop oral fluency when discussing social issues.

**Questions you might ask when discussing a news story or current event include:**

- » What do you think caused the event?
- » How do you think people will be affected?
- » Is it fair?
- » Why do you think people think that/do that?
- » What do you think will happen next?
- » How could the problem be fixed?





### **Some other activities to develop your discussion:**

- » Read several articles together on the same issue to get different opinions. Then discuss the different opinions.
- » Have a debate on a topic, with you and your child taking different sides of the issue.
- » Download and listen to podcasts on an issue, and discuss.
- » Discuss different "What if?" scenarios. This will help develop your child's problem solving and imagination.



## **HELPING YOUR CHILD TO READ**

### **Here are some tips to encourage reading:**

- » It is recommended that you continue to read together in the later primary years, even if your child is reading independently.
- » Take your child to the local library often so they can choose, borrow and renew books. Taking your child to the library at the beginning of school holidays encourages weeks of independent reading.
- » Encourage your child to borrow from their school library as well.
- » If your child likes an author, find another book or a series of books by the same author.