

If you would like any information or advice about
your child's talking, please contact
Bright Start Speech and Language Therapy:



phone

0203 316 1897

Learning to Talk A Parent's Guide

4 to 5 Years



All children learn to talk at slightly different speeds.
The information in this leaflet is only a guide.

This leaflet was produced by Whittington Health
Speech and Language Therapy Early Years Service

Learning to Communicate The Fifth Year

At 4 years of age children start to use longer and more complicated sentences. Your child may not be able to say all sounds correctly, they are still learning at this age.

4 to 5 Years

- If you give your child an instruction while he is doing something he will be able to follow it without looking at you.
- Your child can focus for longer periods of time
- Your child's play becomes more and more imaginative. She/ he enjoys make believe and dressing up
- Your child can take turns with another child and share toys in play
- At this age he understands the feelings of others and feels sorry for someone who is upset
- Your child can understand longer instructions e.g. "Can you put the little teddy under the big chair?"
- He can understand what opposites are, the meaning of 'same' and 'different' and the past and future
- Your child will ask different types of questions such as "why" and "how"
- She can tell long stories about what he has done and can tell made-up stories
- He may continue to make some mistakes in his talking e.g. 'He taked it off'
- She may still confuse some sounds e.g. will say 'wed' for 'red' or 'pider' for 'spider'

How Can You Help?

Your child is now ready to use language to learn more about the world.

Play Memory Games

At school your child will need to remember longer pieces of information.

Play the shopping game. Start with "I went shopping and I bought..." taking turns to add an item to make a long list. Use gestures, such as peeling a banana, to help your child remember the items.



Talk About What Happens Next

When watching TV or reading a book with your child talk about what might happen next e.g. "I think the man is going to fall over, what do you think?"

Talk about what happens next in daily activities such as making a drink or getting dressed.

Play Sound and Rhyme Games

Rhyme is an important skill children need to learn to read.

Take turns to think of a rhyming word for names or objects in the room. Playing "I spy..." will help your child to think about the sounds in words. You can also play "I spy something that rhymes with ...".