

If you would like any further information or advice please contact the Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Team on 0203 316 1897 or visit our website: <https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/IANDS>

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

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SPECIAL TIME



Early Years Speech and Language
Therapy



What is 'Special Time'?

This is a small chunk of your day where your child has your full attention and the focus is on their play. You may find it helpful to watch the following video for an idea of some key strategies you could use with your child during 'special time' to support their communication skills:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJAgWdYM_oq

Hanen – Why Interaction Matters? (Part 2)

How often do I do it?

The key here is little but often. It is easier to do special time for 5 minutes each day than for a longer time on fewer days. Your child's attention span is not very long at this stage so it is better to keep activities short.

How do I prepare for 'Special Time'?

- ✓ Choose a time of the day that suits both you and your child e.g. after nursery, before bed...
- ✓ Find a quiet space for you and your child to play together.
- ✓ Turn off all background noise e.g. radio, TV, mobile phone.



How does it work?

Get down on your child's level.

- Be face-to-face with your child. Give them your full attention. Move around the room as your child moves.

Follow your child's lead.

- Allow your child to choose what they want to play with. Observe your child playing and wait to see what they do. Try not to tell them what to do. If they get stuck, suggest one new play idea. Allow them to take the lead in the play again.

Comment on what your child is doing.

- Talk to your child about what they are doing. Remember to use simple language e.g. if your child is feeding teddy, you can say 'Teddy is eating'.

Reduce questions.

- Too many questions can feel like a test. Instead, talk about what your child is doing, labelling their actions and the objects they are using e.g. 'the big bus' or 'cutting the banana'. Offer them a choice whilst showing them the items e.g. would you like the doll or the blocks?

Use all forms of communication.

- Use gestures, pointing or Makaton signing alongside spoken language to support their understanding.