

the **early years** toolkit

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Pre-school talk

Making friends

Adults are important when helping children's language. So are other children. Pre-school settings such as mother and toddler groups, playgroup and nursery help your child to learn how to play with other children and how to talk and listen to other.

Explore words

Everyone learns new words all of the time. Young children meet new words every day. Explore the new word, explain what the item is made of, what it is for, how it is made. Talk about related items or think of a category, for example:

New word	wardrobe
Made of	wood
Purpose	to keep clothes in
Category	furniture
Related items	chair, table

Exploring words and ideas helps to expand your child's word knowledge. Remember to talk about what your child is doing and what they are interested in.

Making sentences

Children sometimes use only the words that give meaning and miss out the small, grammatical words. Comment about what your child says and fill in the small words, for example:

Child says	"Go nanny's car now"
Your comment	"We'll go to nanny's in the car"

When your child has heard examples of this kind of grammatical structure many times, they will store it for future use.

Rhymes, poems and songs

Nursery rhymes and little poems really appeal to pre-school children. They help them to listen well, hear all about sounds and words and prepare them for school.

Share stories

Encourage children to share books with you, even if for only a short time each day. Books which pop up, have flaps and have bright pictures work well. Talk about what happened in the story. Begin to talk about what happened next and link the story to the child's own experience.

Sounds fun

It is usual for a child not to be sound perfect before school but you should be able to understand most of what they say. Listen carefully and comment back. It is not a good idea to correct sounds or to ask a child to say it again. Better to say it yourself and see if they copy you. It might take a while but their sounds will mature if they hear good examples and feel confident about talking.

The essential rule – HAVE FUN, lots of it!