

# Modelling language



*When children are learning to talk, they will make many mistakes. Children might have trouble putting words in the right order in a sentence. For example, they might say "me can do it" instead of "I can do it". They might also struggle when using location words, like "in" or "on", and say "the cup is up the table" instead of "the cup is on the table".*

**Try the following strategies to help your child use words the right way:**

## Modelling

Modelling is how we show a child what we want them to say. If your child makes an error in their sentence, say it back to them, in a natural way, with a little extra emphasis on the mistake.

Child: "Him is playing."

Parent: "Yes, he is playing. It looks like fun."

## Repeating

Children are more likely to say words they have heard many times before. Repeating the same words over and over, through reading the same story a few nights in a row, or choosing some key words to say in an activity, helps your child to focus on the word and learn its meaning.

## Waiting

Give your child time to talk. Listening and waiting to hear what they want to say will encourage your child to talk more, as well as boost their confidence.

## Holding back

Instead of anticipating your child's needs, wait for them to indicate they want something. When they do want something, hold the object to the side of your mouth and model the word you would like them to say.

Try 3 times with a slight pause in between. If they don't say the word after 3 attempts, give them the object. You can try again a different day.

## Expanding

Expanding on what your child has said shows them you have understood, are interested and teaches them new words.

Child: "More"

Parent: "More milk"

## Talk to yourself

Talk to yourself as you are doing things in your everyday life. Try to use simple language to talk about what you are doing and thinking. For example, when packing up toys:

Parent: "Pack up the toys. Ball goes in. Car goes in. Book goes in. Shut the lid. All finished."

*Adapted from 'Early Communication Skills' Speech Pathology Department, Princess Margaret Hospital.*



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