

Using Language

To help your child develop their ability to express themselves:

- Make sure your child is exposed to lots of language by talking about and commenting on what they are doing.
- Give your child time to process what you have said and think of their response.
- Expand on what your child says. For example:
 - If your child says 'car' you could say 'fast car' or 'green car' or 'daddy's car'.
 - If your child says 'that's nice' you could say it's 'beautiful' or 'delicious'.
- If your child makes a mistake when talking, model what they should have said. For example, if they say 'the dog *runned* away' you can say 'Oh, the dog ran away'. Avoid asking your child to repeat what you say as this could cause frustration and lead to avoidance of talking.
- Ask open questions rather than closed (e.g. yes/no) questions. For example, rather than saying 'Did you have a good time?' you could ask 'what did you do with your friends?'.
- If you have asked a question and your child doesn't know how to respond, offer them several possible answers. For example, 'What did you do at break time?...Did you play football, go to computer club or talk with your friends?'.
- Encourage your child to use a variety of ways to communicate. For example, if they cannot say what they want, show them how they can use gesture, drawing or demonstration to get their message across. Remember to focus on *what* your child is saying, not *how* they are saying it.