

Speech and Language Therapy

Understanding Your Child's Message

Your child may try to tell you something using words or gestures. Sometimes it might not be clear what they are trying to tell you and you need to work out what your child means.

You can help your child learn how to communicate by **saying the words you think they are trying to communicate**. This is called *interpreting* their message.

When this can help

- **If your child uses actions instead of words.**

Example: If your child pulls you to the cupboard where the Lego is, say “Lego” as you give it to them. If they stand by the fridge and you know they want a yoghurt, say “yoghurt” as you give it to them.

- **If your child uses one word to mean more.**

Example: if they say “Peppa” when they want to watch Peppa Pig, you can say “Peppa Pig programme”.

- **If your child's words are unclear.** You can say the clear version of the word back to them.

How to keep your language simple

- If your child is **not using words yet**, use **one or two words** to interpret their message.

Example: if they hand you their cup, say ‘drink’. If they reach for the juice on the shelf, say ‘more juice’. If your child pushes their toast away, say ‘no’. If your child takes you by the hand, say your own name (as they know you). These are all things that your child would say if they could and you are giving them the language at a level that they can learn.

- If your child **is using single words to mean more**, use a short phrase when you interpret their message. Example: if your child says ‘toast’, say ‘more toast’ back to them. If your child says ‘car’ say ‘red car’ back to them.

- If your **child's words are unclear**, say the word back to them clearly. Example: if your child says ‘tat’ instead of ‘cat’, reward their attempt and say ‘cat’ back to them.

A helpful reminder

It is okay if your child does **not** repeat the words you say. Do not ask them to say the word or phrase if they do not do this themselves. What matters is that you are giving them the words they can use when they are ready.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Children's Therapies
Broad Street Plaza
Halifax
Telephone 01422 261340

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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