

First Steps (3-4)

Most children should be able to:

- Understand and use words relating to objects, actions, colour, size (*big and small*), position (*in, on, under*) and numbers.
- Ask 'What?' 'Where?' 'Who?' 'Why?' questions.
- Understand questions not related to the here and now e.g. "What did you eat today at nursery?"
- Understand instructions with 3-4 parts e.g. "Give me the big spoon from the draw"
- Talk and commentate aloud whilst playing.
- Hold a simple conversation using 4-5 word sentences and include description words. (They may continue to leave out words or use immature words e.g. "mouses", "runned")
- Use speech sounds s, f, l, y, z in words but still have difficulty with words where 2 or more consonants occur together e.g. "blue", "sky".
- Remember and sing several nursery rhymes and ask for favourite stories.

What can you do to help?

- Talk about things that happened in the past or things that are going to happen.
- Repeat any words they mispronounce so they hear good examples –don't ask them to say the words again.
- Echo their sentences in the correct form if they leave out words or use immature words.
- Show that you are listening to your child by stopping what you are doing and giving them eye contact.
- Give lots of praise and be a good language model. Don't correct what they say - just say it again yourself.
- Join in with your child's pretend play.
- Comment on what your child is doing and ask some questions e.g. 'I wonder why?' "I wonder how?".

Things to play with - some ideas

- Encourage imaginative play, dressing up, pretend tea parties.
- Use small world / miniature toys such as farm sets, playmobile sets.
- Everyday items to compare e.g. smooth or bumpy, long or short.
- Craft activities e.g. paint, crayons, glue, cartons for junk modelling.
- Early board games such as snakes and ladders.
- Matching and turn taking games e.g. snap.
- Messy play e.g. sand, water, play dough.
- Provide opportunities to play these with other 1 or 2 other children.