

## Why is speech and language so important?

- Communication is vital to a child's development and learning
- One in ten children have poor language skills which can lead to poor behaviour, lack of social skills and affect their learning
- Early intervention can prevent problems and give children the support and help they need
- Parents and staff have an important role to play in helping children become good communicators

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## Sociable buggy babies



Babies and young children can spend quite a lot of time each day lay or sat in a pushchair.

This could be an ideal time for parents and carers to talk with their baby.

Try and choose a pushchair that faces towards the person pushing. This will make eye contact and chatting with your baby much easier.

Research carried out by Talk To Your Baby in 2008 found that parents are twice as likely to talk to children in face-to-face buggies.

## Top Tips for Talking

Your baby's brain grows faster in the first two years than at any other time, so all the encouragement **you** give them is very important.

When your baby is cooing and 'chatting', encourage them by talking back to them. When they say 'ooh' and 'ahh' you say the same sounds back to them and see if they stop, watch you and 'reply' in their own way.

Add some new noises such as bababa, mamama, gagaga, looking and smiling at them all the time

By far the most important thing to help your baby learn is making lots of eye contact and talking to them. Even a tiny baby is picking up the tune of your voice and storing information that will be used later as they learn to speak.

Talk to your baby in short, simple sentences. Pause between sentences. This helps them get the idea of taking turns in conversations and very soon they will begin to fill some of the pauses with smiles and gurgles – their 'answers' to you.

**Remember:** Every opportunity that a child has to communicate with an adult should be a valuable one.