



Royal Society for Blind Children

How can I help my toddler to talk?

Communication needs motivation, which can be tricky for a child with a vision impairment. Because your child cannot always see everything that is happening around them, they may be less motivated to communicate and might take a bit longer to learn to talk.

We recommend speaking to your health visitor or Qualified Teacher for Vision Impairment (QTVI) if you are concerned about your child's speech as they can refer you to a specialist if needed. However, there are lots of things you can do at home to help your child learn to talk and begin to learn a little more about communication:

- Always let your child know who is in the room with them, and who is leaving the room.
- Always use their name when you are speaking to them, and if necessary follow this with a gentle touch to the shoulder to get their attention.
- Talk to your child as much as possible about the things you are doing e.g., talking about bath time (running the bath, turning the taps on/off, getting changed, splashing, washing, getting dry, pulling the plug). Surround your child with language.
- Provide context to noises so your child understands the environment they are in, who is there and what is happening.
- Give opportunities for your child to explore and touch items wherever possible as they may not be able to see what you are talking about.
- Name objects when your child is touching them e.g., when they are holding a ball, say "ball".
- Tell stories and sing songs with rhymes and repetition to encourage your child to participate.
- Use accurate and consistent names for items, e.g. the cup is always the cup, don't sometimes call it a mug or a beaker.
- Refer to people by name instead of calling them 'he', 'she' or 'they'.
- Explain how things work and where things belong.
- Reciprocate and model language.
- Give your child a bit of extra time to answer anything you ask.
- Reduce any background noise or other sensory distractions.

Our Families First team of family practitioners are here to support you through your child's early years and into the future.

RSBC can help you with:

- practical advice about your child's development
- support when you feel overwhelmed.
- understanding your child's vision impairment better
- living as a family and being supportive of each other

Call 020 3198 0225 or email [**connections@rsbc.org.uk**](mailto:connections@rsbc.org.uk)

