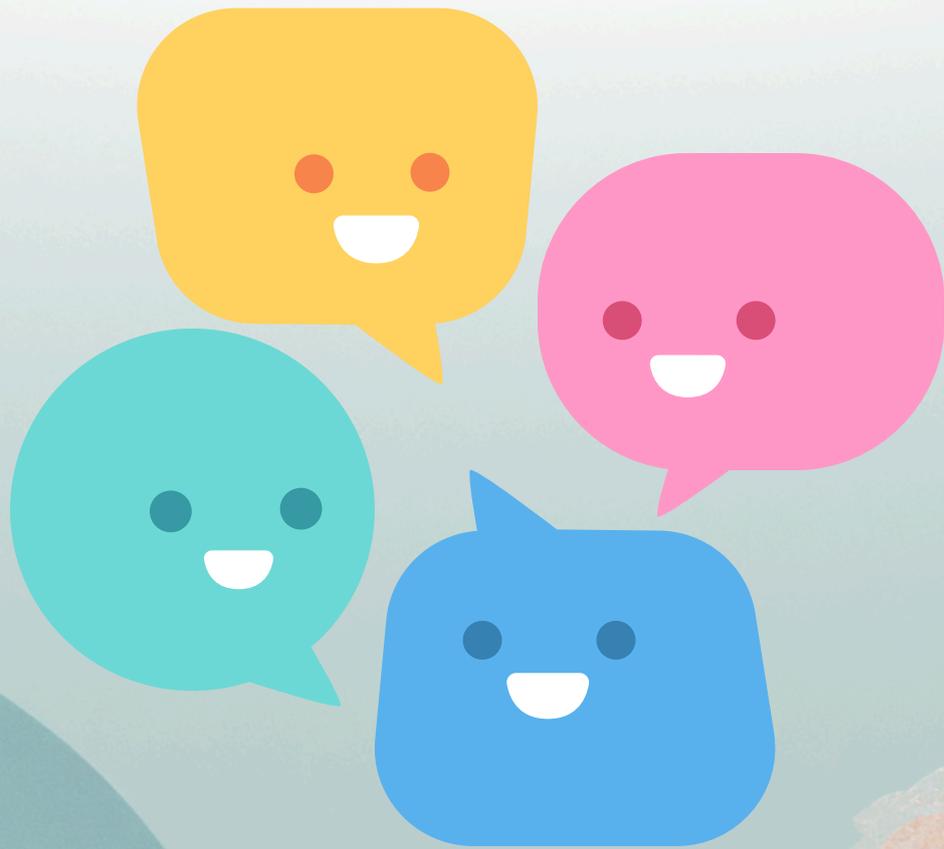


# Let's Talk

**Communication at its Best**



# "Let's Talk!" – Welcome Page

Hello, and welcome — you're already doing this.

If your child has ever told you the plot of their favourite film in extraordinary detail, argued passionately that their way is better, or asked you a question you genuinely couldn't answer — congratulations. Oral literacy is already happening in your home.

And it starts earlier than you might think. Long before they have all the words, children are already communicating — in the way they look at you, reach for you, babble along to their favourite nursery rhyme, or light up when you walk into the room. That is the very beginning of the conversation.

It happens over breakfast. In the car. During the bit of the TV programme you've both seen so many times you could recite it together. It happens when they're upset and searching for the words, and when they're excited and the words come tumbling out faster than you can catch them.

**These activities work for children of many different ages and abilities. Some children will speak in full sentences, others may join in with gestures, sounds, or expressions. All communication counts.**

**This little booklet isn't here to add pressure to your day. It's here to help you notice what's already there — and to offer ten simple, enjoyable activities that need nothing more than a little time and a willingness to chat. Because conversation is learning. And you, simply by being present and listening, are already one of the most important educators your child will ever have. Even on the days it doesn't feel like it.**

# What Children Build When They Talk, Listen and Tell Stories

## 1. Turn Taking

When a child pauses, listens, and waits for their moment to speak, they are learning one of the most important social skills there is. Conversation is a shared exchange — and even very young children begin to understand this long before they have a full vocabulary. That little moment of waiting? It matters more than it looks.

## 2. Conversation as a Skill

Engaging with another person — really engaging — is genuinely complex. Staying on topic, responding thoughtfully, asking questions, reading the mood of the room. When a child holds a real conversation, even a simple one, something quite remarkable is happening. It is absolutely worth celebrating.

## 3. Imagination Stories

Ask children to build pictures in their minds — pictures they cannot see, touch or hold. Every time a child listens to a story, follows a narrative or invents their own, they are exercising one of the most powerful tools they will ever have.

## 4. Story Memory

A favourite tale told again and again is never wasted time. Each retelling helps a child hold the shape of a story in their mind — the characters, the feelings, the ending they already know is coming but love to hear anyway. This is memory, comprehension and love of language all at once.

## 5. Sequencing

Stories have an order. A beginning, a middle, an end. When children retell something that happened, describe how to make a sandwich, or explain why they did something — they are learning that the world has patterns and that order helps us make sense of things.

## 6. Vocabulary

New words land differently when they arrive in context — wrapped in a story, spoken in a moment, connected to something real and felt. A child who hears rich language in conversation is building a vocabulary that no worksheet could replicate.

## 7. Tonal Awareness

The way something is said changes everything. A whisper. A gasp. A long, dramatic pause. Children are listening to all of it, long before they can name what they are noticing. This awareness of tone, pace and expression is the very beginning of emotional intelligence and communication that truly connects.

# How to Use This Booklet

There are no rules here.

**You don't need to start at the beginning, work through in order, or do one activity every single day.**

- **Dip in when it feels right.**
- **Revisit a favourite.**
- **Leave it on the kitchen table and come back to it when the moment feels natural.**

**Some activities will land beautifully first time. Others might get a blank look one week and become a firm favourite the next. Children are like that — and that's perfectly fine.**

**The only thing this booklet asks of you is this: talk together, listen to each other, and enjoy it when you can. Everything else will follow.**

## **Activity 1 — The Story Chain**

**Sit together and build a story one sentence at a time, taking turns to add the next part.**

It can be a completely made up adventure, or you can start with something familiar — a favourite fairy tale, a well loved nursery rhyme, a story they know by heart. Familiarity is a wonderful springboard. There is no pressure to be original, only to join in.

And joining in looks different for every child. For some it will be words and sentences. For others it might be a clap at the right moment, a gesture, a sound, a big excited expression when something happens that they recognise. All of it counts. All of it is communication.

Take turns, go slowly, follow their lead — and don't be afraid to be a little silly. The best story chains usually are.

What they're building: turn taking, story memory, sequencing, imagination, vocabulary

## **Activity 2 — Tell Me About Your Day**

**Instead of "how was your day?" try asking something more specific.**

"What made you laugh today?"

"Was there a moment that felt tricky?"

"If your day was a weather forecast, what would it be?"

And here is a favourite: "What colour was your day?"

There is no wrong answer — blue might mean calm, yellow might mean happy, grey might mean tired. Let them choose and then ask them to tell you why.

You could also invite them to draw their day — just a simple picture — and then talk about it together. Sometimes a drawing opens up a conversation that words alone couldn't quite reach.

Specific questions, and creative ones, show a child that you are genuinely curious — not just checking in.

What they're building: vocabulary, tonal awareness, conversation as a skill, imagination

### **Activity 3 — The Describing Game**

**One person thinks of something and describes it without ever saying its name. Everyone else listens carefully and tries to guess.**

For younger children or those who find open-ended description tricky, try this — gather a small selection of toy animals, coloured shapes or familiar objects and place them where everyone can see them. One person chooses something secretly, without the others looking, and gives clues. Having something concrete to choose from removes the pressure of starting from nothing and makes the game feel safe and playful for every child.

For those ready to go further, encourage vivid descriptions. Not just "it's big" but "it moves slowly, like it owns the world." The more imaginative the better.

What they're building: vocabulary, imagination, conversation as a skill, tonal awareness

### **Activity 4 — What Happens Next?**

**Pause a story — a book you're reading aloud, a familiar film, a programme you're watching together**

Just before something important happens. Ask simply: "What do you think happens next?"

A small note for those of you who wonder whether using familiar stories really counts as learning — it absolutely does. Knowing how a story ends doesn't switch off a child's brain, it frees it. When they already know the shape of the story, they can focus on the language, the feelings, the details.

Familiarity is not a shortcut. It is a foundation.

There is no right answer here. The magic is in the thinking, the predicting, the reasoning out loud. You might be surprised by how much they already understand about how stories work.

What they're building: sequencing, imagination, story memory, conversation as a skill

### **Activity 5 — The Nursery Rhyme Game**

**Choose a favourite nursery rhyme or song — something they know well enough to have in their bones — and leave gaps as you say it together.**

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a..." and wait. See what they offer.

Pause before the rhyming word. Speed up, slow down, whisper it dramatically.

For pre-verbal children or those still finding their words, this is a wonderful activity. A gesture, a clap on the beat, a gleeful expression at the right moment — all of it is participation, and all of it counts.

What they're building: story memory, tonal awareness, turn taking, vocabulary

### **Activity 6 — Interview Me**

**Hand the questions over to the child. They are the interviewer. You are the guest. (Hot Seating)**

They can ask you anything — about your childhood, your favourite things, something funny that happened to you, something you were scared of when you were little. Answer honestly and with detail. Let them be curious.

This one often surprises parents. Children ask questions we don't expect, and listen more carefully than we realise when the story is about someone they love.

What they're building: conversation as a skill, turn taking, vocabulary, tonal awareness

### **Activity 7 — The Feeling Check**

**After a story, a film, or a programme, pause and talk about how the characters might be feeling.**

"How do you think she felt when that happened?" "Was he scared or excited — or maybe both?" "Have you ever felt like that?"

Talking about fictional feelings is often much easier than talking about our own — and it builds the bridge beautifully. Children learn to name emotions, recognise them in others, and begin to understand that feelings are complicated and perfectly normal.

What they're building: tonal awareness, vocabulary, conversation as a skill, imagination

## **Activity 8 — Remember When**

**Share a memory together.**

It can be something recent or something from a long time ago — a funny moment, a special day, something that went unexpectedly wrong and became a family story.

Tell it together, filling in each other's details. "Do you remember when...?" "And then what happened?" "I forgot about that bit!"

Shared memories become shared stories. And shared stories are one of the ways families build their own language — their own way of saying we belong to each other.

What they're building: story memory, sequencing, turn taking, vocabulary

## **Activity 9 — Silly Voices**

**Read a favourite story or make one up — and use a completely different voice for every character.**

A booming giant. A tiny squeaky mouse. A very serious wizard who speaks extremely slowly.

Invite the child to join in. Swap characters. Get it gloriously wrong on purpose and see if they correct you.

This is pure joy — and it is also quietly teaching children that the way something is said is just as important as what is said. Tone, pace, expression — these are the ingredients of truly powerful communication.

What they're building: tonal awareness, imagination, story memory, turn taking

## **Activity 10 — The Question Game**

**Take turns to ask each other one question each.**

Any question at all.

The only rule is that you both have to answer honestly — and then ask one back. Keep it going as long as it feels natural.

It sounds simple, and it is. But it builds something really important — the understanding that good conversation moves in both directions, that curiosity is a gift, and that the person in front of you is always worth knowing better.

What they're building: turn taking, conversation as a skill, vocabulary, tonal awareness

## Remember - You're Already Doing This

**There is no perfect way to do any of this. Some activities will spark something wonderful. Others might get a shrug and a change of subject — and that is absolutely fine. Children are like that. So are adults, if we're honest.**

The most important thing is that you tried. That you sat together, talked, listened, and showed your child that their voice matters to you. That is not a small thing. That is everything.

Come back to this booklet whenever you need it. Dip in on a rainy afternoon, a long car journey, or one of those days when you just need something simple and kind to do together.

You don't have to be a teacher to raise a communicator. You just have to be present — and you already are.

**Keep talking. Keep listening. Keep going. ❤️**

**Want more?**

**"Let's Talk!" is just the beginning.**

**The Communication Collection is a series of resources designed to help children find their voice — in every form. From storytelling and listening, to understanding the world they watch, to telling their own stories on screen.**

**Explore the full collection at [whyplaylearning.com](http://whyplaylearning.com)**

**Find us on Facebook: Learning for All**

**Because every child has something worth saying.**

**This is a list of upcoming titles in this series.**

**FREE "Let's Talk!" ✓ — this booklet - Oral Literacy Activities for Everyday Life (free resource)**

**"Tell Me More" An Oral Literacy Activity Booklet**

**"I Can Show You" Visual Literacy Through Film and Media**

**"Lights, Camera, Me!" Making Short Videos and Telling Your Own Story**

**"They're Learning, I Promise" A Reassurance Journal just for you (the parent companion)**

**and later down the line**

**"Raising Communicators" An Online Course for Home Educators (longer term goal)**