## Please feel free to adapt this information to use in the ‘Red Book’

## **Personal Child Health Record Information**

## **Language Development**

Babies start learning language even before they're born and keep learning as they grow up. You're the first person who teaches your child. They pick up language from all the talks, games, and daily activities you do together. Simple conversations during daily housework, baths, or walks help them learn. You don't need special toys as your child learns a lot just by hearing you talk.

Talking with your child during daily routines helps them connect words to things around them. This is important because it helps them express feelings, have fun, and make friends.

Communication isn't just about talking. Even before using words, your child communicates by looking at you, pointing, smiling, or making sounds. When you watch, listen and respond, it encourages them to communicate more. It shows them you care about what they're trying to tell you.

**Language Milestones (to add to the already existing ‘checklist for making sounds’)**

Children develop skills in understanding and talking at their own rate. Knowing what the milestones are, can help you identify any speech and language difficulties early. Early identification of difficulties is important to ensure your child gets the right support, and getting help early can make a big difference to your child’s development. If you have any worries or concerns about your child’s speech and language, please contact your health visiting team or early years worker for advice.

**0-12 months**

Children develop these skills at different rates. Before 12 months of age many children will begin to use early speech sounds or babble (e.g., ‘ba’, ‘ma’, ‘da’), and will be communicating through their behaviour for example by looking at your face, smiling, and listening to your voice.

**12 to 18 months**

Children develop these skills at different rates. By 18 months, children will usually be able to:

* Uses up to 20 recognisable words such as ‘hello’ ‘milk’ ‘cup’ ‘bye’
* Understands more words than they can say
* Understands and follows simple instructions such as: ‘where is your nose?’
* Uses single words and babble during play
* Enjoy pretend play, such as hugging a dolly, feeding a teddy, putting a teddy or a dolly to bed
* Enjoy nursery rhymes and sharing books with an adult.

**How to support your child**

* **Getting down to your child’s level**: When you physically get down to your child's level, such as sitting on the floor during their play, they will be able to see what you are looking at, and hear your sentences more easily, and you will be sure that you are talking about what interests them the most
* **Following your child’s lead and interests**: When you follow your child's lead and interests, you can show the language they need to talk about what interests them. This will help them learn words more quickly
* **Pause and wait for your child**: When you pause and wait for your child to show you what they are interested in, it gives them time to start communicating or respond to your actions or words. Your child may point, look at an object or say a word. The words you say will be all about what has interested them, making it easier for them to learn
* **Describe what your child is doing or looking at**: Talk to your child during everyday routines like mealtimes, bath time. When you describe what your child is doing or looking at, you are showing them the language they need to talk about what interests them. This will help them learn words more quickly
* **Have fun and use an interesting voice**: When you show you are having fun and use an interesting voice, it will encourage your child to focus and listen to what you are saying. Having fun together will encourage your child to communicate with you.

**18 months to 24 months**

Children develop these skills at different rates. By 2 years old, children will usually be able to:

* Use up to 50 words
* Start to put two or more words together to form short sentences, such as ‘more juice’.
* Understands more words than they can say
* Understand and follow simple instructions such as ‘get dolly and put it in the bag’.
* Play alongside or near other children but not with them

**How to support your child**

* **Listen, watch and respond to your child**: When you listen, watch and respond to your child's communication (what your child is saying or doing), it helps keep the conversation going about something your child is interested in. The more turns you and your child take, the more words and sentences your child will learn.
* **Repeat back what your child says and add a word**: When you repeat what your child says and add a word, it helps your child know they have shared their ideas with you and helps them learn how to make their sentences longer. If your child says ‘car’, you can reply with ‘big car’, ‘fast car’ or ‘red car’.
* **Describe what your child is doing or looking at**: talking to your child during everyday routines like mealtimes, bath time. When you describe what your child is doing or looking at, you are showing them the language they need, to talk about what interests them. This will help them learn words more quickly

**2 to 3 years**

Children develop these skills at different rates. By 3 years old, children will usually be able to:

* Use up to 300 words and can have simple conversations
* Put 4 to 5 words together to make short sentences such as “I would like an apple”
* Understand and ask questions beginning with ‘what?’ ‘where?’ ‘who?’
* Identify objects by their function ‘which one do we drink out of?’
* Listen to and remember simple stories with pictures

**How to support your child**

* **Repeat back what your child says and add a word**: When you repeat what your child says and add a word, it helps your child know they have shared their ideas with you and helps them learn how to make their sentences longer. If your child says ‘car’, you can reply with ‘big car’, ‘fast car’ or ‘red car’.
* **Ask open questions such as ‘who’ ‘what’ ‘where’ ‘why’:** When you do ask questions try to keep them ‘open’. That means ‘what’, ‘why, ‘where’, ‘who’ and ‘how’ questions that encourage more than just Yes or No answers. When you ask open questions, it helps open up the conversation, allowing it to continue with more turns and follow the child's interests

**Resources**

There are many resources that give you tips, advice, and activity ideas to do with your child.

**Tiny Happy People** [**https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people)

This website includes activities, short videos and articles with helpful tips and advice to support your child’s communication. The QR code will take you to fun activities to do with your child to support their communication development. Almost any daily activity is a chance to talk and have fun with your child.

**Hungry Little Minds** [**https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/toddler/learning-to-talk/learning-to-talk-2-to-3-years/**](https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/toddler/learning-to-talk/learning-to-talk-2-to-3-years/)

This website provides valuable information and resources to support you to boost your child’s language and literacy development with fun, everyday activities.

**What to do if you’re worried about your child's development**

All children develop at different rates, but if you are worried about your child’s development please speak to your health visitor or early years worker who can offer advice and support. Getting help early can make a big difference to your child’s development.