

**Language**

The Communication Pyramid shows the different elements that make up speech, language and communication.

Children need to be able to understand words before they can use them in their talking.

* **Comment more & question less 🡪** Children learn from adult models of language. It’s more helpful to comment on what they’re doing instead of asking lots of questions. E.g. “You’re building a big tower” instead of “what are you building?”
* **Create opportunities for your child to talk 🡪** Offer your child choices, and encourage them to request. E.g. Ask your child “water or juice?” and wait for them to make a choice. Put a favourite toy out of reach so they have to ask you for the toy.
* **Simplify questions 🡪** Use ‘who?’ ‘what?’ ‘where?’ as they are easier for children to understand. ‘When?’ ‘why?’ and ‘how?’ are more complex questions.
* **Short & simple 🡪** Break down instructions into small chunks and use key words only, to help your child understand. Give one step at a time and allow your child time to complete each step, before giving the next step. E.g. “Coat on (wait) shoes on (wait) hat on” instead of “Go and find your coat, shoes, and hat, put them on and wait by the door.”
* **Make it visual 🡪** Use gesture, objects, pictures and/or symbols to support your child’s understanding of spoken language. E.g. Show them their coat when you’re going out.
* **Slow Down 🡪** Pause between sentences and slow down your rate of talking. This gives your child extra time to process and understand what you have said.
* **Repeat back &** **expand 🡪** Repeat what your child says and add on 1 or 2 more words to encourage them to expand their sentences and develop grammar. E.g. Child: “Boy book”, Adult: “Yes, the boy is reading the book.”

 Child: “I putted my shoes on”, Adult: “Yes, you put your school shoes on.”

Useful websites: [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk) and [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

Visit our website at [www.cnwl.nhs.uk/hillingdon-talks](http://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/hillingdon-talks) for more information and links to further useful websites

 Find us on Facebook at ‘Hillingdon Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy’ for more handy hints and tips