

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Home Talking Program: Help Your Child Start Talking

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If your child is slow to start talking, the single most powerful thing in the world is already yours: everyday moments with you. Children learn to talk not from screens or flashcards, but from warm, back-and-forth interaction with the people who love them — and there is a lot you can do at home to help those first words come.

This program turns well-established speech-therapy techniques into a simple daily routine any parent can follow. It won't replace a proper assessment if one is needed, but for many children it gives talking the gentle push it needs — and it never does harm.

Who this program is for

- ✓ Toddlers who are slower than expected to start using words
- ✓ Children who understand you but say very little
- ✓ Children who point, pull or gesture instead of talking
- ✓ Any parent who wants to actively help their child's language grow
- ✓ Families waiting for, or unable to easily reach, speech therapy

Important — when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program, not a diagnosis or a substitute for an assessment. Please speak to a professional promptly if:

Your child was talking and has lost words or skills they used to have

No babbling, pointing or gestures by around 12–15 months

No single words by 18 months, or no two-word phrases by around 2 years

Your child seems not to hear you, or had frequent ear infections

You feel in your gut that something isn't right

☆ **Your step-by-step roadmap**

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are a gentle order, not a race. Repeat any stage as long as it helps.

Week 1 — Get face to face

Make yourself easy to watch and copy.

Get down to your child's eye level for play and chats — on the floor, or face to face at the table.

Follow their lead: play with whatever they're interested in, rather than steering them to your choice.

Pause and wait after you say something — give them a full five seconds to respond in any way.

⚡ **Try this:** Sit facing your child, not beside them — seeing your mouth helps them learn sounds.

Week 2 – Talk about the here and now

Put simple words to what your child is doing.

Narrate play in short phrases: “car go”, “big splash”, “teddy up”.

Keep it one step above your child: if they use no words, model single words; if they use single words, model two.

Name things they look at or reach for, the moment they show interest.

⚡ **Try** Less is more — a flood of long sentences is harder to copy than one clear
this: word repeated warmly.

Week 3 – Build in reasons to communicate

Gently create little moments where talking is worth it.

Offer choices: hold up two things and ask “milk or water?”, then wait.

Put a favourite toy in sight but out of reach, so they must ask (in any way) for help.

Pause during familiar songs and routines so they can fill in the gap.

⚡ **Try** Accept ANY attempt — a sound, a point, a look — then say the word for
this: them and give them the thing.

Week 4 — Expand and repeat

Grow what they say and keep it fun.

When your child says a word, repeat it and add one more: they say “ball”, you say “big ball”.

Read simple books daily — but talk about the pictures rather than only reading the text.

Sing the same few songs with actions every day; repetition is how words stick.

⚡ **Try** Repeat new words many times across the day — children often need to **this:** hear a word dozens of times before saying it.

🔑 Tricks that make it work

- ✓ Turn off background TV — quiet makes your voice easier to hear and copy.
- ✓ Respond to every attempt as if it were a full sentence — this builds confidence to try again.
- ✓ Make it playful, never a test — pressure and “say it!” demands tend to backfire.
- ✓ Use gestures and simple signs alongside words; they support talking, they don’t delay it.
- ✓ Slow down your own speech a little and stress key words.
- ✓ Two languages at home is fine — it does not cause delay; keep speaking the language you know best.

🛡️ How you’ll know it’s working

- ➔ Your child looks at you and “takes turns” more during play
- ➔ More gestures, sounds or attempts to communicate, even before clear words

- A slowly growing list of words they understand and then use
- More enjoyment of shared books, songs and simple games



Is this based on real methods? The everyday techniques here — following the child's lead, modelling language just above their level, and building in reasons to communicate — are the foundation of well-established parent-coaching approaches such as the Hanen Centre's programmes, and reflect Cochrane evidence that parent-delivered speech and language support can be as effective as clinician-delivered support.