

Give a child a reason/need to communicate

One of the best ways to help a child learn how to communicate is to give them a reason to do this.

It is natural to want to help a child who is struggling to do something but they are often more motivated to communicate when they have a **problem that needs solving!**

The following gives you some ideas how to do this.

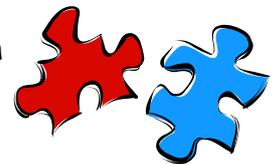
- **Try not to anticipate all their needs.** For example if they need help doing up their coat or putting on their shoes then don't just automatically do it. Instead you could hold up their shoe and just say 'yes ?' or do something silly with the shoe like put it on their hand . This then creates an opportunity for them to **NEED** to communicate.

- Place a favourite snack on a high shelf so they can see it but not reach it or place interesting objects/toys in a clear container that is hard to open.

- Offer toys/activities that are **hard to operate/open** e.g. wind-up toys, bubbles, playdough with a tricky lid. If they can't open it /make it work then ask an open question such as 'What?' If they can't tell you then model the words they need to say. For example 'open please', help please' etc. Then try the activity again and see if they remember what to say.



- Deliberately make **silly** mistakes or do **unexpected** things e.g. put a sock on your arm, put on the child's coat, give them the wrong toy/food, use a pen with the lid on etc. Pause and see if the child responds. If not say 'uh oh silly me! What do I need to do?'



- **Offer things bit by bit rather than all at once.** Keep hold of puzzle pieces, lego blocks, stacking rings. Offer individual pieces one by one. You can do the same with food. Model phrases such as 'more bubbles', 'more', 'next piece' etc.

- **Keep quiet!** Look through books together, point to and name pictures. Then point to a picture and say nothing. Alternatively, look out of the window (or go for a walk) and show excitement at what you see. Point, and say 'Look a cat!' etc. However, the **next time you see something**



interesting, become animated but wait for your child to do the pointing or commenting.