



Conversations and vocabulary games to try at home

Whatever your child's starting point is, enjoying a book together allows them to develop their understanding, as well as to learn lots of new and exciting words. It is so important to read to your child whenever you can. You can ask them to read to you by telling the story from the pictures or let them recite a book they know really well because it is a family favourite.

You can also use our virtual Library on our school website for some great story telling videos: <https://www.shirleyinfantschool.org.uk/> click at the bottom of the home page.



However, when you are using these with your child try not to let them watch it, hide the screen and let them listen to it. Or you can turn the sound down and read some of them yourselves.

Talking with and listening to your child teaches them the importance of spoken language and supports them in developing their vocabulary. When chatting with your child, try to avoid asking too many questions, but let them hear your own thoughts; children need to hear language in order to use it themselves. When you are doing a household chore or deciding what to cook for tea, model your thinking aloud.

When you do ask your child a question, it is ideal to ask an 'open' question - one that cannot be answered with a single word. For example, 'What was the best thing that happened today?' rather than 'How was school?', to which the inevitable answer is 'Fine!'

Here are some suggestions to help you practice before you start school:

- **What made you happy today?**
- **What made you sad today?**
- **What was funny about today?**
- **What did you learn that was new today?**

You will get so much more out of your little one when they arrive home from school if you do not ask them the standard 'how was school today?' 'Who did you play with?' question. To support their speaking and listening skills and the word gap in so many children, it really helps if you do this too. So have a go at answering the questions above too.

A few other great games to play are:



I wonder.

'I wonder if you had a superpower, what would it be?'

'I wonder what would you take to the moon?'

'I wonder which book/film/TV character would you like to meet? Why?'

'Let's imagine it snowed tomorrow. What would we do?'



I Spy

One player says, 'I spy with my little eye something that is yellow'. Or 'I spy with my little eye something that is fluffy.' The other players have to guess what it is ie 'a yellow cushion' or 'a fluffy teddy'.

If your little one is ready for initial sounds you can play the original I spy ie 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with a.' (it will really help if you use the letter sound rather than the letter name).

I went shopping

Say aloud 'I went shopping and I bought ...' for example, cheese, and the next player names this item and adds another, so players end up reciting a list. Play continues until a player can no longer remember all the items.

So..... 'I went shopping and I bought cheese'.

Next player ... 'I went shopping and I bought cheese and bananas'.

Back to the first player I went shopping and I bought apples, bananas and bread'.

