



Early Years Language Focus Week 08-12 June 2026

Why exploring language is important

Children's speech develops from babble, to words, to simple sentences through hundreds of hours of interactions with adults. Studies show that once babies begin to understand words their vocabulary increases quickly:

- by age 1, children recognise about 50 words
- by age 3, children recognise about 1,000 words
- by age 5, children recognise about 10,000 words

Having a large vocabulary helps children learn more. Words allow them to make sense of the world around them.

Communication and language is a EYFS prime area which means that it's one of the important building blocks for all the other areas. If it's not developed early it's difficult to achieve later.

Children's language skills are connected to their overall development and can predict their educational success. As speaking and listening develops, children build foundations for literacy, for making sense of visual and verbal signs and ultimately for reading and writing.

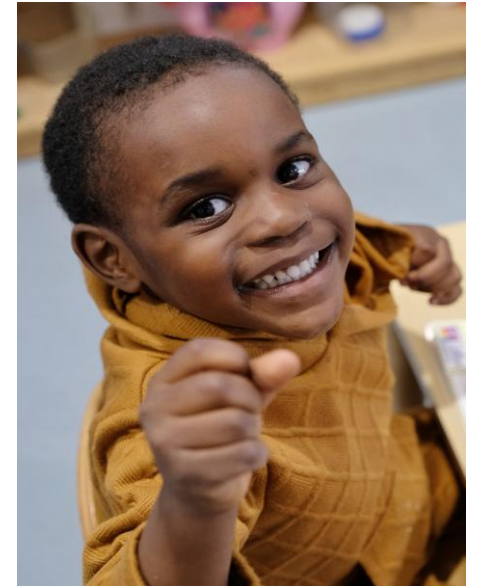
[Help for early years providers : Exploring language](#)

Why do you need an ELLP



The Early Years Team want to continue to grow our ELLP network in Slough so that we can ensure children are supported with high quality adult interactions in learning environments that support speech language and communication development. As an ELLP you will:

- Embed techniques of the week using simple visual prompts and modelling strategies
- Support high quality interactions from all adults working in the setting/school
- Identify areas for support for children's SLC in your setting
- Access to SALT advice and strategies through ELLP networks
- Cascade and support your wider team to develop into confident and skilled practitioners supporting children's early speech language and communication
- Create communication friendly environments; including visual prompts
- Work with your families to support their child's language at home and ensure consistent strategies are shared
- Inform local priorities to support SLCN in Slough by Early Years and SALT teams



Technique of the week (ToW)

Be Face to Face

Whenever you talk with a child be face to face....

- Watch carefully and notice the child's unspoken response as well as any talk.
- Even if you are waiting quite a long time for a child's response do not turn away ... wait expectantly.
- A child that is not yet talking can indicate their preferences through facial expressions and gestures. Watch carefully for these.
- If you need to help the child ... do it from in front (lifting baby, fastening zip, doing up tie, wiping nose!)
- Share this information with parents ... it often helps with the 'he doesn't listen to me' issue!

Try to be at the same level as the child.

- We particularly need to think about how we manage this outside, we are often standing and therefore very much taller than the child.
- Consider using a chair or cushion
- Is it OK to lie down to play alongside a child?
 Is this an attractive option in your setting?
 Would you be comfortable?

Technique of the Week

Be face to face

Whenever you are talking with a child try to get face to face, e.g. having a conversation, zipping up coats, giving instructions.

Try to be at the same level as the child, e.g. when reading a story, doing circle time.

Remember: if you're not face to face with a child they may not be able to take on board everything you are saying!



The Role of the Early Language Lead Practitioner

Discussion points for 'Face to Face'

- Model good practice in provision using a range of I Talk techniques and strategies and appropriate recording. ** Practice 'Face to Face' ... then when confident point out your modelling of the technique to colleagues in same room. Extend to other rooms in consultation with manager or deputy.*
- Monitor the learning environment to ensure that resources and experiences support the development of communication and language
- Support other practitioners to develop their understanding and expertise in using the I Talk programme through encouragement, modelling, advice and training. *Explain and model 'Be face to face' with other practitioners, especially outside.*
- Engage with, and work with others to engage with, families in need of support with communication skills development. *Identify parents who would benefit from receiving this information. Help other practitioners to identify parents to share the info with and support them with ways to start the conversation.*
- Monitor the completion of child monitoring records and ensure that appropriate interventions take place.
- Moderate I Talk child monitoring record sheets and whole cohort data sheets.
- Analyse I Talk data for trends and patterns.
- Use I Talk data to identify vulnerable groups and ensure that this knowledge impacts on planning and provision, specific support and actions for individual and groups of children
- Engage in CPD and cascade information to other practitioners and families
- Use with other professionals and practitioners
- ... an advocate for I Talk

What to do next to access support and resources for your setting/school



- Discuss with your EYFS lead / manager
- Attend an introductory session
- Contact the EY team karen.loft@slough.gov.uk
- Initial support visit/call with EYAT
- Create ELLP ITalk folder for your resources and print TOW
- Introduce first 4 techniques
- Access regular support from EY advisory teachers as you embed TOW
- Attend the termly ELLP networks for ongoing CPD and support



[Introduction to ELLP Programme and ITalk | The Link](#) **Location:** Online

Date: 8 June 2026 **Time:** 13:00 - 14:00

[Introduction to ELLP Programme and ITalk | The Link](#) **Location:** Online

Date: 8 June 2026 **Time:** 6:30-7:30pm

[Childminder Network Meeting: Achieving a strong standard in speech, language and communication to support your Ofsted](#)

[Inspection | The Link](#) **Location:** Online

Date: 9 June 2026 **Time:** 7-8pm

[Using Stories to Support Learning | The Link](#) **Location:** Online

Date: 11 June 2026 **Time:** 1 – 2pm

[Using Stories to Support Learning | The Link](#) **Location:** Online

Date: 11 June 2026 **Time:** 6:30 – 8pm

[ELLP programme and Italk | The Link](#) for childminders **Location:** Online

Date: 7 July 2026 **Time:** 19:00 - 20:00

ELLP Language focus week 8-12th June
Special story times in local libraries for
childminders



Working with SALT



Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

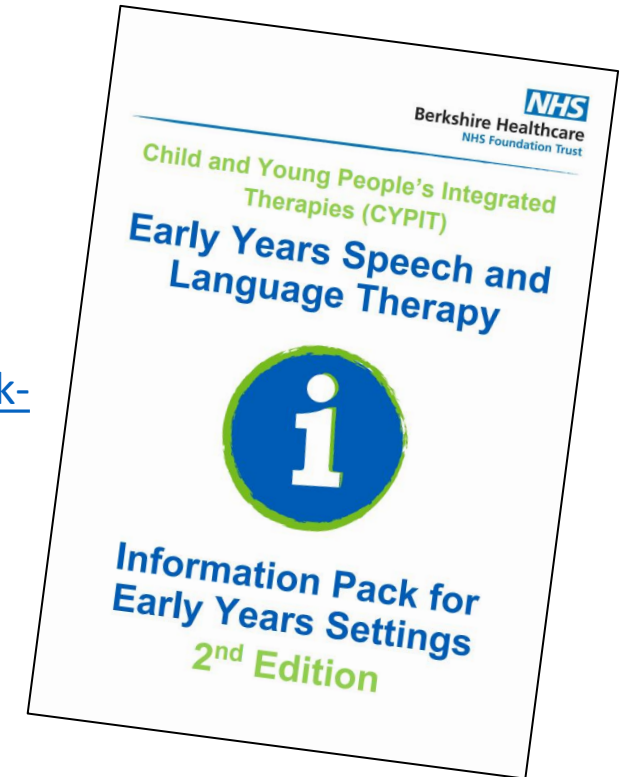
[Speech and Language Therapy Service for children and young people | Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Our Speech and Language Therapy team is part of our Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies (CYPIT) Service. We support children and young people whose communication difficulties are impacting on their everyday life.

They may find it difficult to:

- Communicate their wants, needs, ideas, and opinions
- Understand language, such as following instructions and answering questions
- Speak clearly
- Have meaningful interactions with others
- Speak fluently (without stammering or stuttering)
- Eat and drink safely

[early-years-information-pack-edition-2.pdf](#)



• [Look on our advice pages](#) - Here you will find all sorts of advice and strategies to help with many different issues that might affect your child's communication.

Top Tips for supporting SLC

Get at Eye Level: Drop down to the child's physical level during play and interactions so they can easily see your facial expressions and mouth movements.



Follow Their Lead: Observe what your child is focusing on and talk about that specific object or action, rather than trying to redirect their attention.

Sing and Share Books: Repetitive nursery rhymes, songs, and daily shared reading help children learn the rhythm of language, vocabulary, and sounds.

Offer Choices: Instead of asking what they want, offer a specific choice of two items, such as "Do you want water or milk?" or "Car or ball?"

Pause and Wait: After you speak or do an action (like blowing bubbles), pause for ≈ 5 to 10 seconds to give them processing time to respond.

Acknowledge All Communication: Gestures, pointing, babbling, and eye contact are all valid communication. Respond to them as if they spoke full words (e.g., "Ah, you're pointing to the dog! Doggy!").

Comment Instead of Question: Avoid asking too many testing questions like "What is that?" or "Can you say blue?" Instead, use exciting commentary like "Wow, look at the blue car go!"

[How to be a super communicator - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

[How to help your child's early language skills – top ten tips from the experts – The Education Hub](#)

[Supporting children's early communication skills - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)

Reading to support early language skills



There can be few things as powerful as regularly reading to a young child. It has astonishing benefits for children: comfort and reassurance, confidence and security, relaxation, happiness and fun. Giving a child time and full attention when reading them a story tells them they matter. It builds self-esteem, vocabulary, feeds imagination and even improves their sleeping patterns. **National Literacy Trust**

Reading with young children builds strong oral language, expands vocabulary, and teaches sentence structure. Shared book time exposes kids to complex words they wouldn't hear in daily conversation, forming the foundation for future literacy, comprehension, and academic success. **DfE**

Read to your child often – it will build their vocabulary.

[The importance of sharing books and stories with children for their development | National Literacy Trust](#)

[Help for early years providers : Reading comprehension](#)

[The importance of reading in early years education | EEF](#)

[Early-Reading.pdf](#)

[National Year of Reading 2026 | Go All In](#)

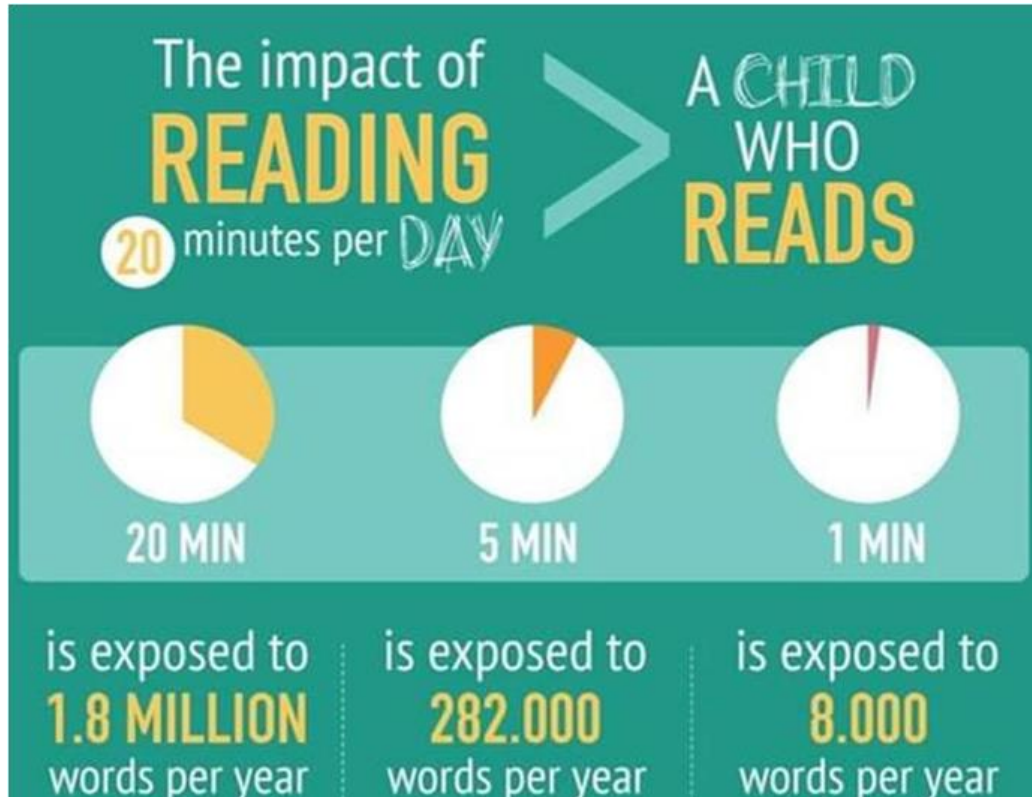
[Reading tips | BookTrust](#)

[Top tips for reading with your child - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Guidance for Parents](#)

[Reading With Your Child: Simple Activities to Build Confidence and Literacy Skills | Save the Children](#)

[Sharing books with your child - Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)



READING WITH YOUR CHILD: WHAT TO REMEMBER

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START SHARING STORIES WITH YOUR BABY

BABIES CAN HEAR FROM 24 WEEKS IN THE WOMB - SO WHY NOT READ BUMP A STORY?

HOW YOU TELL A STORY IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE STORY ITSELF.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE THINGS THEY TAKE AN INTEREST IN ON THE PAGE AND TALK ABOUT THOSE THINGS

... TRY & MAKE IT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE!

IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES FED UP, IT'S FINE TO FINISH MIDWAY THROUGH...

FUNNY VOICES!

AS THEY GET OLDER, ASK THEM QUESTIONS BEYOND THE STORY

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO JOIN IN, WHERE YOU CAN

SHARING STORIES IS A GREAT WAY TO DEVELOP ATTENTION SKILLS, LEARN NEW WORDS, HEAR SENTENCES & BUILD IMAGINATION.

READING BOOKS WITH BABIES & TODDLERS ISN'T ABOUT TEACHING THEM TO READ

BBC TINY Happy PEOPLE

[Tiny Happy People - Tips and advice for children's speech and language](#)

[The Toddler Club: Reading Tips with Toddlers - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

[Tiny Happy People - Bilingual babies and speaking multiple languages at home](#)

If you read just **one** book a day to your child, they will have been read **1825** books by their 5th birthday.

Every Day Counts.

Every Book Counts.

[How to make and use a story sack | National Literacy Trust](#)

[Make reading fun with Chase Bank | Words for Life](#)

[CBeebies Parenting: Making storytime magic - Tiny Happy People](#)

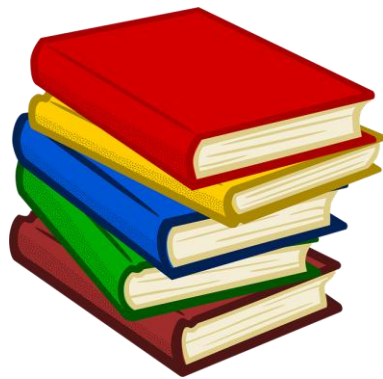
Slough Library Services



[Libraries – Slough Borough Council](#)

[Babies and toddlers – Slough Borough Council](#)

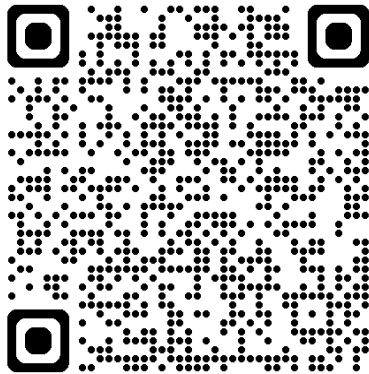
[Events and activities – Slough Borough Council](#)





EarlyYears@slough.gov.uk

[Slough Information and Services Guide |
Speech, language and communication needs -
resources for parents](#)



[Slough Information and Services Guide |
Speech language and communication needs -
resources for professionals](#)

