

Secondary Talk Homework

Communication is everywhere, but we don't always think about nurturing it as a skill. There are lots of things you can do at home to help support your child's communication development, think of it as their 'talk homework'.

Talking Books

➤ Talk to your child about a book that they've read or are reading; what's it about, what did they like about it, what were the characters like, which characters did they like, not like?

Word definitions

➤ Help your child to develop their vocabulary by playing a word definition game: choose a word from the dictionary and say how you would define that word. If it's an unusual word, just guess, and then read out the real definition.

Family memories

- Have a look at an old family picture or a favourite object.
- You could ask everyone in the family to choose their favourite picture or object and talk about it.
- Encourage your child to ask questions about the picture or the story to get a conversation going...

Trust walk

- This game really relies on good communication skills; use a blindfold (a scarf or a tie will do) and do a 'trust walk', where your child has to direct you to a specific place while you're blindfolded – can they do it without any crashes?!
- You can make this more difficult by setting out an obstacle course first and starting back at the beginning if you touch anything.

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Word Associations

➤ Play a word association game: one player says a word and then the next player needs to say a word that is linked to the word before it (e.g. computer > keyboard > piano > drum...).

➤ See how many turns you have before a player can't think of a word...it gets harder and harder the longer it goes on!

Charades

➤ Play a game of charades; think of a book, song, film or TV programme and try to act it out, without words, so that the other person can guess what it is.

Problem Solving

➤ Allow time for problem solving using language and discussion. If your child has a problem they need to talk about, you can talk through it by: identifying the specific problem, talking about why it's a problem, thinking through some possible solutions and then choosing a solution for them to try out.

Clarifying and Understanding

➤ Help your child to develop the skills they need to understand by practising how to ask for clarification. During homework time, encourage your child to recognise if they haven't understood something and think about questions they could ask of you or their teacher in order to make it clearer.

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Let's debate

➤ Develop skills in how to debate and negotiate by talking about questions that could cause some controversy; you can find some debate starter ideas here:

Questions

- Is it ever ok to tell a lie?
- Is fashion important?
- Is competition good?
- Are professional footballers paid too much?
- Should animals be used for research?
- Is it a good idea to have a school uniform?
- Is television better than books?
- Should computers replace teachers?
- Should teenagers be able to learn to drive earlier than 17?
- Do violent computer games and films have a negative effect on children and young people?
- Is it ever ok to tell someone's secret?