Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust

Modelling language for your child

What is "modelling language"?

- Children learn language by hearing words over and over again.
- A child may need to hear a word many, many times before they are able to say it themselves.
- It is important to **model** words and phrases; for example **commenting** on what is happening around you— such as 'mummy is reading' 'daddy is cooking' so they can begin to pair the language they are hearing to the activity that is happening.
- Using lots of natural gesture when talking to your child may help them understand the words you are using.
- Encouraging your child to copy and use these gestures may help to reduce their frustration if they do not have the words to communicate.
- Modelling is **NOT** asking your child to repeat or asking questions for example: "what's that?"
- Asking your child to repeat or answer questions when they do not have the words can affect their confidence and may make them less likely to practice speaking.

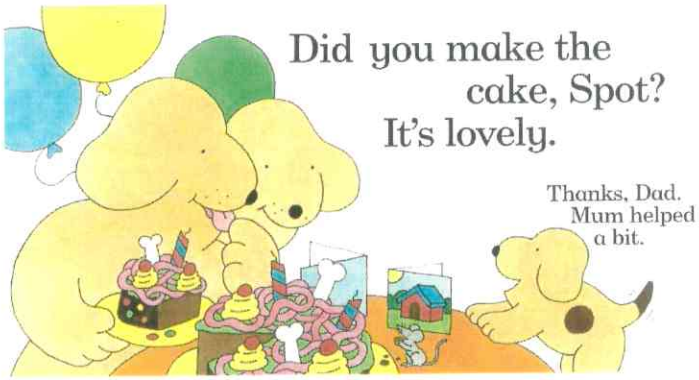
Activities to try at home

Story time

Looking at books together is a fantastic way to practice modelling. This does not mean that you have to read the book word for word, looking at picture books can be far more valuable as you are describing what is happening and what you can both see.

- For example: Child says: "dog" Parent says: "yes, dog eating cake, om nom nom".

A child is more likely to actively listen and copy if you acknowledge what they have said first and extend their own sentence.





Special time

- Spend 5 minutes a day to play with your child with no other distractions for example; TV off, ipad away, no phones etc.

- Make sure everyone else at home knows it is special time so you and your child are not interrupted.

- Let your child choose the activity and follow their lead—you can comment on what they are doing e.g. 'look car', 'red car', 'big car', 'car driving' ,'car crash!'.

- They can then begin to pair the language labels with activity they are doing.

- Try to avoid asking questions e.g. 'what's that?' and focus on