

# Screen Time & Language and Communication

## Helping children become confident communicators!

Too much screen time can have negative affects on language and communication skills. Children are born wired to communicate but when they watch screens it reduces the opportunities for listening, talking and playing with others. Many children's shows or apps use simple, repetitive language to keep them engaged, but we know children learn language better through real life experiences.

Too much screen time means that children are not using words in context. This can mean they are less likely to understand and remember those words. When children hear words in different situations, they learn what they mean and how to use them.

Children learn language best from you and the world around them. To help children be confident communicators they need;

- Serve and return conversations, this is when one person speaks then the other person responds.
- To hear a variety of words, use words/signs to describe what your child can hear, see, taste and touch.
- Time to listen and respond, waiting up to 10 seconds for your child to respond to you helps give their brains time to process what you have said and think of a response.

## Top Tips to support language development !

- Spend time playing together, creating fun experiences that children will want to talk about! This helps them learn and use new words.
- ★ Lead by example. Be a positive role model for your child by putting your phone away during this time. Turn off other distractions like the TV during play.
- ▲ If your child's words are unclear, model them back clearly but don't put pressure on them to repeat after you.
- For older children, watch screens together and talk about what you see.



Another useful thing to know....Children need to hear words several times before they start to understand and use them.

**We know it may be tough to move your child away from screens. We urge you to not give up! The steps you take will help your child's communication and language skills, as well as lots of other areas of their development.**