



London Borough of Hounslow

Top talking tips for parents/carers, early years practitioners in Hounslow

The questionnaire was sent to all children’s speech and language therapists; speech and language teachers; educational psychologists; and qualified teaching support staff in children’s centres in Hounslow in February 2010.

Each had seven points to allocate for each category.

The poll results are below:

Rank	Tips	Total responses
	Tips for parents of 0-5s	
1	Turn off the TV / computer more often. One hour a day is plenty for small children. Too much can weaken your child’s ability to listen and talk later on in life.	12
2 (joint)	Stories, songs and games all help language learning.	10
2 (joint)	Talk in short, simple sentences. Use words that your child understands.	10
2 (joint)	Offer choices – even if you know what your child wants. It gives them another reason to learn to communicate and develops their vocabulary.	10
5 (joint)	Watch, wait and listen – give your child time to start the talk or play.	9
5 (joint)	Include a bedtime story in your child’s daily routine	9
5 (joint)	Talk with your child about what you are doing together in <i>your</i> daily routine	9
8	Ask fewer questions. Give short comments and attentive silence	8
9	Playing with everyday objects is as good as specially designed toys	6
10	The less your child uses a dummy, the better their speech and teeth will develop!	5
11	Follow your child’s lead in play.	4
11 (joint)	Wait! Learn to wait for several seconds for a child to answer you.	4
13	Listen more than you talk.	1
	Tips for EY Practitioners	

1	Speak at a slowish pace, with gaps, to allow children to process what you are saying more securely.	13
2 (joint)	Ask fewer questions. Give more comments and attentive silence	12
2 (joint)	Action songs, rhymes and story-telling help develop spoken language skills	12
4	Create nurturing play opportunities, (as well as free play), where an adult facilitates interaction and chatter between children	11
5	Remember to teach verbs (action words) as well as nouns (names of things). Verbs are vital for sentence-making.	10
5	When praising, tell the child explicitly what learning or social behaviour s/he has shown. Praise especially good listening, looking and concentration.	10
5	If you are concerned about a child's speech sounds or language or social communication, get the family's permission and refer to speech and language therapy sooner rather than later.	10
8	Ensure your face is well lit and that children are looking at your face when you are talking.	8
9	Create situations where the children have to solve problems and talk about it.	5

	Tips for Key Stage 1	
1 (joint)	Be as visual and practical as you can in whole class as well as small group teaching	12
1 (joint)	Teach 'Good Listening' early on, with regular practice and visual prompts	12
3	Talk in short, simple sentences – especially when you are introducing something new or important.	11
4	Consider pre-teaching of background vocabulary for upcoming topics, especially for those children who may struggle.	10
5	If you are concerned about a child's speech sounds or language or social communication, get the family's permission and refer to speech and language therapy sooner rather than later.	9
6	Watch out for potentially ambiguous or confusing language e.g. 'bigger' numbers.	7
7	Speak at a slowish pace, with gaps, to allow children to process what you are saying more securely.	6
7 (joint)	When praising, tell the child explicitly what learning or social behaviour s/he has shown.	6
9	Don't forget verbs when teaching concepts and topics. Verbs are the lynchpins of sentence-	5

	making.	
10	Ask fewer direct questions. Use more indirect cues, comments and attentive silence	4
10 (joint)	Model regularly the communicative and social behaviours you want from the children	4
12	When working on new language and social communication skills, avoid trying to teach new concepts or fine/gross motor skills at the same time. Instead, use everyday/familiar themes and activities.	2

	Tips for Key Stage 2	
1	Be as visual and practical as you can in whole class as well as small group teaching	11
2	Talk in shorter, simpler sentences – especially when you are introducing something new or important.	9
2 (joint)	Consider pre-teaching of background vocabulary for upcoming topics, especially for those children who may struggle.	9
2 (joint)	Use mapping techniques frequently to show visually how thought and language should be organised, e.g. flowcharts, cartoon strips, Venn diagrams, spider diagrams, mind maps etc.	9
5	Continue to foster 'Good Listening' ethos.	7
5 (joint)	When praising, tell the child explicitly what learning or social behaviour s/he has shown.	7
5 (joint)	Remember that working in pairs and small groups requires very high level / subtle social and linguistic skills. Some children may need greater support at these times. Practise this model of working first <i>without</i> academic content, to establish the basics. Consider adopting the model for group working of identifying a 'facilitator' and a 'recorder'.	7
8	Spend as much time as possible practising the use of basic connectives/conjunctions in everyday and familiar topics, in order for the children to then use them confidently for more academic or socially challenging situations.	5
9	Speak at a slowish pace, with gaps, to allow children to process what you are saying more securely.	4
9 (joint)	If you are concerned about a child's speech sounds or language or social communication, get the family's permission and refer to speech and language therapy sooner rather than later.	4

11	Watch out for potentially ambiguous or confusing language e.g. 'bigger' numbers.	3
12	Ask fewer direct questions. Use more indirect cues, comments and attentive silence	2
12 (joint)	Model regularly the communicative and social behaviours you want from the children	2
12 (joint)	Don't forget verbs when teaching concepts and topics. Verbs are the lynchpins of sentence-making.	2
12 (joint)	When working on new language and social communication skills, avoid trying to teach new concepts or fine/gross motor skills at the same time. Instead, use everyday/familiar themes and activities.	2