

## Paediatric first aid

**Supporting children to talk about their experiences isn't always straightforward.**

However, many studies have shown that when children retell a story or an experience, they are strengthening their skills in vocabulary development and story comprehension, whilst also enhancing a feeling of well-being and belonging.



See our top tips on how to 'get children talking':

1. Model telling stories and also model active listening. By leading the way, you encourage children to follow in your footsteps. Children are much more likely to talk to an adult who is actively listening and clearly interested in what they have to say
2. Provide prompts for children. Use materials that help children to recall events, such as a bauble to recall how they helped decorate the Christmas tree
3. Involve parents in seeking out children's interests and passions. Parents will know what their child is most interested in at home. What is that one character, toy or animal that their child can't stop talking about at home? By dropping this into the conversation you may find even the quietest of children can't help but tell you all about it
4. Use reflective listening strategies. Rather than asking children lots of questions, simply repeating back what they've said and changing the intonation can encourage children to add more information to their story
5. Take care, not to over-correct children's pronunciation. Focus on what children are telling you rather than their accuracy. If children become worried about saying things wrong, it can put them off sharing
6. Using phrases such as 'I wonder if', 'Can anyone remember that time....?' can excite children and encourage them to talk freely about their experiences
7. Support children to make links from their experiences. When children can connect ideas and experiences, they will have more to talk about! For example, 'Oh Jamie, this looks just like that frog we saw last week! I can't remember where we saw it though...'
8. Don't be afraid to ask children what they mean. If you can't quite make out what they are saying or it isn't clear, then supporting children to find another way to say it shows that you are interested in what they have to say. It also supports children's vocabulary development
9. Some children may find speaking freely challenging due to confidence issues. By allowing a pressure-free space, where they feel safe to join in when comfortable, you can really support their speech and language development. Remember if you have any concerns, seek professional support.