



Stories, props and language development



Language development is the key to all other areas of learning and development and an important tool for life. Babies become able communicators by watching, listening to, and copying care givers and wider family members through interactions, play and daily routines.

Sharing books and stories with babies and young children is important to help them develop early babbling, vocabulary, listening skills and attention. Using gestures, expressions and imagination can make story telling an enjoyable and fun experience for both caregiver and baby and will help promote a life-long love of reading.

What to look out for - Observing

- When sharing stories, listen to the sounds your baby makes and copy them in response.
- Your baby may begin to say words, Listen and model how they should be said ie baby points to a banana and says 'na na', 'that's right, a banana'.
- Watch as your child handles books. Your baby may have a favourite page or picture or respond to a word or sound you make when you read from the book.
- Your child may have a favourite book. Are they anticipating what is coming next through their actions and/or sounds?



- Cardboard box for posting
- Props- Wooden spoons, puppets, socks, household items/toys that links to the stories.
- Pillow case- 'What's in the bag'.
- A range of story books- felt, concertina, board books, flip flap books, textured, mirrored books
- Your local library.
- Its best to avoid ebooks for children under two years. Ebooks are unlikely to have many benefits for this age group and aren't recommended. If you're interested in [ebooks](#), look for ones without distracting games or animations. And it's important to enjoy ebooks with your child, rather than leaving your child alone with a device.



Talking



Children love to interact and hear your voice so follow their lead and [talk to them](#) about whatever they show interest in.

[What's in the bag?](#)

Use a pillow case and find exciting textured objects for your child to feel, pull out and name.

What is your child learning?

Listening



Children love to hear the same book over and over again and it helps them learn the words.

[Post box](#)- Make a post box out of a cardboard box. Your child can find favourite toys or household objects to post through. This gives you a great opportunity for you or child to name and talk about items.

Activities and experiences to offer to try

New words



Talk about what's going on in front of you. If you're preparing a snack or getting dressed, just narrating your actions out loud is an easy way to give babies more spoken words.

Visit [I love my books](#) website, click on a book and look at the section make/do.

Sharing



Finding time in your day to [share stories together](#) is fun and rewarding. You don't have to read all the words, you could talk about the pictures or make your own story up.

Making [sock puppets](#), [story spoons](#) or a [story basket](#) can be great props for young children to use when telling stories.

Just by looking at books with your child and talking about them, you can be a great storyteller and a good model for using language and books. Your child will learn by watching you hold a book the right way and seeing how you move through the book by gently turning the pages.

More Ideas and further suggestions

[Look, Say, Sing, Play - Brain-building tips | NSPCC](#)

[50 of the Best Rhyming Books for Kids - The Imagination Tree](#)

[Search | BookTrust](#)- List of recommended books

[Big Little Moments | SSBC \(smallstepsbigchanges.org.uk\)](#)

[Words for Life | National Literacy Trust | Words for Life](#)

[talk-together-2020.pdf \(ican.org.uk\)](#)- Helping young children and babies learn skills for talking