

# Helping your child to be ready for school - developing communication and language skills with your child



Tips for  
parents  
and carers



Harlow  
Council  
*Working together for Harlow*

## Using language every day

- Talk about what you are doing. For example, “I am putting the washing into the basket.”
- Talk about different sounds you can hear when you are outside.
- Encourage language through role play. Take on different characters as you go about your daily routine.
- Take time to talk and listen to each other every day. Meal times are an ideal opportunity for this.
- Play ‘I spy’ games when you are out and about or travelling in the car.



**Being a good speaker involves  
being a good listener**

## **Building language**

- Share books, stories and rhymes together.
- Be a good listener and respond to what your child is talking to you about.
- Give your child thinking time without jumping in.
- Provide opportunities for your child to both speak and listen.
- Use talk to describe what you are doing. For example, “I am going to pour it into the cup”.
- Build your child’s vocabulary by giving choices, for example “would you like an apple or banana?”
- Build your child’s sentences by repeating what your child says and adding words, for example if your child says “car” you could say “yes, the blue car”.

**Try using a new word every day**

## Sharing books together

- Share familiar stories and encourage your child to 'read' to you, using the pictures or from memory.
- Ask what your child thinks may happen next.
- Think of different endings together.
- Use rhyme and songs and encourage your child to join in.
- Lift the flap books can help your child stay focused and interested.
- Share books in your daily routine for example at bedtime.
- Encourage your child to read by letting them see you read books or magazines.



**Children learn  
from you**

## Early literacy skills in play

- Encourage your child to use their favourite stories in imaginary play.
- Play games like letter lotto to encourage your child to recognise letters and the sounds they make.
- Hide letters around the house and ask your child to find the correct sound.
- Encourage your child to make marks by asking them to make a shopping list or menu.
- Ask your child about what they have 'written'.



**Children learn  
from you**

# The Harlow Pledge for Educational Attainment:



## Supporting every Harlow child to aspire, learn and achieve

*We, the Harlow Strategic Partnership for Educational Attainment, pledge to work together to give every Harlow child every opportunity to fulfil their potential.*

*To achieve this we will support every child and family:*

- Before school – ensuring that every child starts school equipped with the skills to learn*
- At school – helping schools to improve where required to provide the very best education for every child*
- Post-16 supporting opportunities to ensure that every young person can carry on learning and achieve their full potential*

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