

Talking Tips

Families **talk** now

Choices

Offering choices can help develop children's understanding of words.

To start with, help your child to make choices about things that they can see. Hold the things you are talking about right in front of your child. That way, you can give them it or do what they want **STRAIGHT AWAY**. That helps them realise that trying to use words has good results!

Using choices to talk about things that might not happen straight away, or things that your child can't see, doesn't work as well. This is because there is a delay between the choice and the event.

"Do you want to go to the shops or the park?"

Go to the park two hours later.

Your child has forgotten they made the choice and so they are not encouraged to try and say 'park' again!

Questions that just need 'yes' or 'no' answers are not very helpful because they do not encourage children to say much. For example "Do you want milk?" "Yes". 'Yes' and 'no' words can be useful, but you want your child to learn and use other words too!

Questions with a choice in them encourage children to use at least one other word: "Do you want milk or water?", "Milk".

It is very important you do **not** try to make your child say the words clearly. If they look or reach towards one of the choices, that's fine – accept that as a choice. If they make a sound "uh!" or try to say the word – that is even better. You should then label their choice, e.g. "Great, you want milk" for them to copy later.

You can use choices all the time!

- Watching television, "Are you going to sit on the sofa or the floor?"
- At dinner, "Do you want more pasta or no more pasta?"
- Getting dressed, "What first? socks or top?"
- "Shall we play outside or inside?"
- Washing, "Do you want me to do your feet or your hands?"



You will need to offer choices a **lot** before it starts to make a difference.