Top Tips for Speech and Language Development

Attention

Make sure you've got your child's attention before speaking, e.g., tapping them on the shoulder, turning a light on and off. Encourage everyone communicating with your child to be deaf aware.

Listening

If your child uses hearing technology, use it as much as possible. Link objects to noise, e.g., alert your child to an item making a noise, like an aeroplane going through the sky. Use symbolic noises, e.g. cow – moo, train – choo choo etc. Use subtitles on all videos and TV. Repeat key information.

Talking

Talk to your child lots, e.g., talking about what you're doing, where you're going, what you can see. Add a commentary to what your child is doing, e.g. "Tommy you are pushing the blue car, brm brm". Repeat back a longer and correct version of what your child says to extend their sentences. Leave gaps for your child to respond and encourage them to take a turn.

Story Time

Look at books together (try reading books with deaf characters / storylines) and point out different characters, objects etc. Talk about emotions, for example if a character is sad name the emotion and why, e.g. "Spot is sad he lost his ball" and show your child the corresponding facial expression.

Vocabulary

Always name what you are speaking about and avoid saying "This one". When giving choices name the item "The blue cup or the red cup" instead of "This one or this one". Describe objects to your child. Use visuals to support.

Speech

If your child produces a word wrong, model it back to them correctly, without saying they have said it wrong.

Signing

Use gestures and signs, such as British Sign Language and use these at the same time as talking. Make sure everyone is using the same signs.