Top tips for communicating with your child

Below are some top tips for communication development when you are out and about this summer.

- Talk about the things your child is interested in. For example, if they're playing on the slide in the park, go over and comment 'weeee you're sliding down'

- Use comments and prompts to keep the conversation up. They're better than questions for keeping children involved. For example, if your child is eating an ice-cream, comment, 'Mmm, that looks good. I love ice-cream.' They can then respond with more words than if you ask 'What's that you're eating?'

- Put aside time each day for talking together

- If your child doesn't get it quite right the first time, don't say "that's wrong", say it back the right way. For example, if your child says, "I goed swimming", just say back to them, "yes you did, you went swimming.'

- Explore words - talk about new words when your child comes across one

- Enjoy conversations with your child - children learn from conversations with adults as much as their friends

- Comment on your child's play using simple language, such as "horse jumping", "man eating orange"

- Ask your child to follow simple instructions, for example feed a teddy, and see if they can copy

- Remember to OWL! 1) Observe your child 2) Wait for them to interact with you 3) Listen to their responses to you

- Extend what your child is saying by one more word than they can say. If they say "soup please" you say "tomato soup please". Or if they say "want soup please" you say "Hannah wants soup please"

- If you're doing any activity, it can be a good idea to do the same thing beforehand so that children know what to expect. For example making sandwiches for a picnic. You could also recap the activity after you've done it. This helps to develop children's ability to understand and say the words involved in the activity, because you'll be repeating them.

- Most importantly - have fun!

If you're concerned about your child's communication, log onto Talking Point (www.talkingpoint.org.uk) and use the 'progress checker'. You can also find your nearest speech and language therapy services using the postcode searchable database.

These tips have been provided by both Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and Oxfordshire County Council, and Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust.