



# Speech, Language, Communication and Literacy

## I've heard that speech and reading are linked, is that right?

Actually, yes they are. Speech, language and literacy are closely linked. This is because to develop good literacy skills, you need to be able to speak and understand language. If you can't say it or understand it, you won't be able to read it or write it.

## So, how are they linked?

Well, some of the key skills we need for reading and writing are speech and language skills. For example, to be a good reader you need:

- **Good attention and listening skills.** You need to be able to pay attention and concentrate. Listening to other people reading and telling stories will help with later literacy.
- **A good vocabulary.** You need to understand a good range of words to help with reading and writing. Vocabulary is important to be able to understand what you have read, have a guess at what a word might mean, and to produce an interesting piece of writing. So, without a good vocabulary, literacy skills will be limited.
- **An understanding of what you hear and read in sentences.** This includes things like processing of longer pieces of information and understanding of grammatical information, like past tense and plurals.
- **To be able to decode words.** Reading involves cracking a code and part of this code involves understanding the sounds that words are made up of for example, being able to know what sound a word begins or ends with, or knowing and saying words that can rhyme. Also, the way children actually say sounds in words may affect how they are able to decode what they are reading.
- **Understanding of how stories work.** To be a good reader, you need to know how to tell stories and have conversations as this means you will be able to make sense of what you are reading. The ability to make inferences, understand story structure, and understand what is happening in stories really makes a difference to reading comprehension.

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**I CAN Help enquiry service** [www.ican.org.uk/help](http://www.ican.org.uk/help)

Call 020 7843 2544 to arrange a free phone call from one of our speech and language therapists or email [enquiries@ican.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ican.org.uk)

**Talking Point** [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

Visit this website for information about children's communication.

## **My son has language delay. Does this mean he won't be able to read well?**

Not necessarily. We know that language and literacy are closely linked, but children with language difficulties can still learn to read. But his language difficulties might mean that it is more difficult for him. It is important to support his reading as much as you can, and that everyone that works with him is aware of his language difficulties. There are lots of things that you can do to help. Ask his speech and language therapist for some ideas for developing his language to help his reading and writing.

## **How can I help my child? I want her to learn to read but she does struggle a bit with her talking.**

There are lots of things you can do to help your child learning to read. Try these tips:

- Keep talking. Talk about things you see in the book - who's in it, what they did and where they went. When learning to read, pictures can be just as important in a story book as the words. Help your child to work out what the story is about or what a word might say using the pictures. But don't ask too many questions – make comments and observations.
- Help them to learn new words. Talk about what different words mean and tell your child the name for anything they don't know. This is how children learn new words and helps them to become better readers.
- Make a book part of your bedtime routine - share a story, snuggle up and get chatting
- Have toys that relate to books like the Gruffalo or Spot the Dog - children can act out stories using these as characters. This will help them to learn to tell stories based on what they've read and heard.
- Why not make your own books - you can use your phone or a camera. Take pictures when you're out or doing something at home and make it into a story together. You can talk about what you did and what happened. Children start to tell stories about what they've done and what they know about and you can help them with this.
- Tell stories together - talking about your day and what you did means sharing time with your child. We tell stories all the time, both real and made up and these stories can help your child become a reader and a writer of stories.

If you are concerned about your child's speech or understanding, get in touch with I CAN Help. You can book a free call back from a speech and language therapist to talk through your concerns. Call 0207 843 2544 or e mail [help@ican.org.uk](mailto:help@ican.org.uk)

### **Useful links:**

Talking Point [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

Words for Life <http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk>

I CAN Shop <http://www.icancharity.org.uk/shop>

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