A summary of speaking and listening skills

We use speaking for:
- explaining
- discussing
- persuading
- asking questions
- giving reports
- sharing
- answering questions
- giving instructions
- exploring ideas
- telling stories
- arguing
- reflecting
- describing events

To be successful speakers we need to:
- know procedures i.e. introductions, phone calls
- demonstrate social conventions i.e. look at speaker, wait for turn to speak, accept and encourage others.
- speak confidently
- be aware of our audience
- use correct tone and style
- use volume appropriate to the situation
- use facial expressions and gestures
- be able to speak to large or small groups

We use the following types of listening:
- appreciative – for enjoyment and relaxation
- purposeful – for accuracy, attending to one person or sound
- discriminative – for gaining specific information
- analytical – for gaining specific information and giving a response
- marginal – listening when there are distractions in the background

To be successful listeners we need to:
- value listening – prevent interruptions when others are listening
- attend to the speaker
- try to eliminate distractions
- engage in conversation (practising listening and speaking)
How to help your child with speaking and listening.

Encourage.....
your child to exchange greetings and farewells in various situations, such as making friends and introducing themselves e.g. 'Hello, I'm Gina. What's your name?'

Show.....
your child how to use the telephone. Teach them what to say when they answer the telephone and how to take a message.

Sing...
jingles, rhymes, songs. Say poems and chants together. Read favourite rhymes and stories aloud with lots of expression.

Practise.....
following directions and giving instructions e.g. cooking, using Make and Do books.

Model.....
the use of nodding and eye contact etc. to show how to be an active listener.

Encourage.....
your child to experiment with voice intonation and expression. Role play characters from favourite stories e.g. re-enacting story time at school. A few dress-up items will help.

Provide.....
a range of toys and material that will encourage talk and description, e.g. blocks, play dough, jigsaws, soft toys. "What have your made?"
Ask questions...
about events and allow time before expecting a response, e.g. ‘What did you do today? What was good about today?’ Encourage your child to ask questions to find out things.

Share....
retellings of events, promoting sequence and accuracy, e.g. ‘what happened after that? What was the next thing you did?’

Suggest...
ideas for show and tell and encourage a rehearsal of what your child will say and do.

Compare....
the way in which we speak to others in formal and informal situations, e.g. show and tell, playing with friends, meeting new adults.

Listen....
to taped stories with read along books. Tape your own stories and retellings, make your own books to go with them.

Play....
Listening and speaking games, e.g. ‘I spy’.

Encourage....
Your child to wait for an appropriate time to speak. Discourage interruptions.

Model....
Standard speech and encourage your child to attempt appropriate patterns, e.g. ‘I go park’. ‘Yes we will go to the park.’
Encourage talk by............

- Displaying a genuine interest and demonstrating that you are listening

- **Asking questions** that require more than a Yes or No answer, e.g.
  - How will you reach that cup?
  - What happened then?
  - How did you .....?
  - How many ways can....? 
  - What would you do if ....?
  - Why is ....?
  - How did you feel when....?
  - Where would you like.....?

- **Using prompts** to initiate or extend responses, e.g.
  
  Tell me....
  Think of all the ....
  Suppose a ....
  What would you think about...?

- **Providing wait time** after asking a question allows children time to formulate answers

- **Accepting the child’s attempts and the rephrasing** what is said provides an appropriate model in a positive way, rather than simply correcting incorrect words or statements e.g.

  Child: Dis my shoe
  Parent: Yes, this is your shoe and look.... this is the other one.