Sharing books with your baby

Sharing books is a great way to start to help your child learn to talk and it’s a good time to share cuddles as well!

Find a quiet place. Turn off the TV and radio so there are no distractions.

You don’t always have to read the words and don’t worry about looking at all the pages in the right order – let your child take the lead.

Choose books that your child can explore – bath books or cloth/feely/flap books.

Make your own ‘books’ of familiar people or things using photos or pictures cut out of magazines/catalogues – not all books need words.

Talk about the pictures - if it’s a picture of a dog, talk about a dog you know.

Give your child time to respond to your chatter and keep your talking simple – use single words or short phrases to describe the pictures.

Don’t put any pressure on your child to name pictures but if s/he copies your words, praise her/him and say the words again for her/him.

Don’t read for too long. Young children get bored quickly so ‘little and often’ is best. Let other people - grandparents, brothers and sisters – join in too.

Use props and puppets – something to look at/feel keeps children interested.

It’s good to share favourite books again and again. Repetition helps children to understand and remember the language they hear.

Remember – you are not teaching your child to read. Children learn to talk a long time before they learn to read, and sharing books is a great way to help your child’s language development.

Visit your local library – it’s FREE to join www.talkingpoint.org.uk

Some information taken from ‘Talk to your Baby – The National Literacy Trust’ – October 2012