

Early Years Service

We work with children under 5 living in Hackney who have difficulties with:

- Understanding language and following instructions
- Using words and sentences
- Communicating and playing with their friends and family
- Hearing, listening & attention
- Pronouncing words & sounds
- Stammering or stuttering
- Eating and drinking

Children who are in Hackney schools are seen by their school's link Speech and Language therapist and can be referred via the school's SENCO.

How we work

We work with children and their parents at home, in Children's Centres or in their nursery / playgroups – whichever is best for the child and family.

We work together with lots of other people, including teachers, Health Visitors and Early Support Workers.

Contact details

Speech and Language Therapy

1st Floor D Block

St Leonards Hospital

Nuttall Street London

N1 5LZ

Tel: 020 7683 4262

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Play and Early Language

Parent information leaflet



“Be like a kid and play with him. That seems to work. Playtime works.”

Hackney parent reflecting on her child's progress with talking

Play and Early Language

Talking and playing together is the best way to help develop your child's language

How can playing help my child's talking?

Young children learn best through play. Children learn to link words to objects, actions and concepts through their play.

They also learn about sharing, interacting, and communicating with others.

Children learn through copying the world around them – they may copy your actions around the house! They will soon begin to copy you in play.

Stay and Play sessions

Hackney offers Stay and Play sessions at each of its Children's Centres across the borough. Your child can attend these sessions for free.

These are an opportunity to interact with other children and to play with different toys.

Sessions may include activities such as healthy cooking, playing with sounds, messy play and story time.

To find out more contact your local Children's Centre or speak to a Speech and Language Therapist.

Tips for talking

Get down on your child's level

This will mean they can see your face, and this will help them to learn more about talking.

It will help you to notice what they are looking at, and interested in.

Follow your child's lead in play

Play with the toys your child chooses.

Try not to tell your child what to do – see what they do first and join in.

Extend their play – e.g. pretend to drink from a cup if your child is holding a tea cup.

Add words

Talk about what your child is looking at or doing.

Use simple language.

If your child is not yet using any words, choose one word or a sound

to comment. For example: 'down' or 'wheel!'

Things to remember when playing

- × **Do not ask questions** - questions reduce the amount of language children use.
- ✓ **Wait for your child to show you when to join in** - only speak when they look at you or show you something. It is helpful to play in silence for a while.
- ✓ **Repeat the words your child uses** so they know they are right.
- ✓ **Add words** to expand on what they are saying. If your child says, 'Fall down' – you could say 'Yes, the horse fell down'.
- ✓ **Use new words again and again** – repetition is good!
- ✓ **Use new words in different situations** – e.g. 'duck' in a book, playing with toy farm, visit to a pond...

