



Blog

Time to talk: how a new intervention promotes back and forth conversation.



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Talking Time is an invaluable intervention.

It combines children's language development and professional development.

While sharing the story book *Peace at Last*, the children and I had an interesting and sustained conversation.

This was during our **Talking Time** session: a time when we focus on children's language and conversation skills in an intimate group.

Here's a part of our conversation:

Zara: Look, I can see Mr Bear, Mrs bear and...

Arham: Baby bear

Zara: That's right, there's Mr Bear, Mrs Bear AND Baby bear. I've noticed something else too (I point to the pictures ...)

Liam: It's the moon and stars.

Zara: Good spotting, Liam. So that must mean it's...

Everyone: Night-time.

Mahira: When its morning I see the moon, when it's night-time it glows.

Zara: Yes, Mahira. Sometimes we see the moon in the morning as well. At night-time it is bright and helps us see, just like a torch.

Arham: Yeah, glowing moon like torch.

Zara: Hmmm. I wonder what else we can see in this picture?

Liam: I can see the all the windows are lighting.

Mahira: I can see the shadows.

Zara: I like what you guys have noticed – the shadows and the light. We can see the light on from the window. That must mean someone is inside - I wonder who it could be?

Liam: I can see it on the floor.

Zara: That's right, the light from the window is glowing on the grass.

Arham: It's bear house.

Zara: Yes, the bears live there.

Let's find out what happens next.

My experience of **Talking Time**

I'm not exactly sure why this is, but during Talking Time, I never feel under any pressure. I feel like I know what I'm doing and that both me and the children will benefit. I really enjoy this special time with the children.

During the sessions I, as a key person, try to carefully choose my group based on the children's individual learning stages, and the dynamic of the group.

Having time with my key children helps me get to know them and their learning levels better. This enables me to pitch my sessions to meet their needs, while also being ambitious about their learning. It also ensures I spend some quality time with them several times a week.

Children are great models for each other - I have seen the impact of this during successful talking time sessions. They seem to urge each other on - it's wonderful to see. They become the teachers!

Many children find it hard to spend time indoors, but having a special story book that we read seems to motivate them to come inside and join in. They like to take part in a special time with a small group of friends. Also, they know exactly what will happen - this helps them feel safe and secure in their learning.

One of the children finds it difficult to speak at all in a larger group, but during Talking Time she's joining in happily. What more can we want from a language intervention?

By Zara Kayani

Further reading

Talking Time programme page: [Talking Time© – Department of Education \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

Institute of Education (UCL): [Empowering staff to enhance oral language in the early years](#)

EEF Evidence store: [Description of interactive reading](#)