

Parent Language – Making Comments

Information for patients, relatives and carers

December 2023

What are comments?

Speaking and interacting with your child is very important for developing their communication and interaction skills. There are many different ways of speaking and interacting, some are more useful for your child's language development than others. Comments are sentences that we direct at other people because we want to share information with them. Comments can be statements (e.g. "it's snack time"), observations (e.g. "I can see a car"), opinions (e.g. "I like your shoes") or instructions (e.g. "get your coat").

Why is making comments a good strategy?

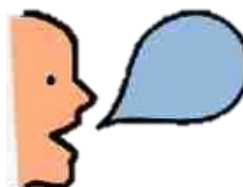
Comments serve a very different purpose from questions in that comments **provide** information to somebody else whereas questions are a way to **get** information from others. Children benefit far more from hearing adults' comments about what's happening in the here and now than being asked lots of questions. Commenting lets your child hear lots of valuable language and information about what things are called and what is going on around them. Questions can put unnecessary pressure on your child to communicate, sometimes at a level that is beyond what they are capable of.

How do I increase comments?

We use lots of questions without realising it. Your child may not understand the questions, or have the language skills to answer! By **reducing the number of questions** and **increasing the comments** you use, you will be modelling more appropriate language for your child. This reduces pressure on them to speak.

Activities to try at home:

- ☐ 1. Notice your questions
- ☐ 2. Turn questions into comments
- ☐ 3. Commenting during play



Notice Your Questions

- Spend some time listening carefully to how you and other people talk to your child
- Do you or other people ever ask your child questions that they are unable to answer?
- Do you ever hear anyone asking questions like “what’s this?”, “what’s that?”, “what are you doing?”, “what have you got there?”, “what do we do now/next?”, “can you say?”, “what’s the matter?”, “what happened?”, “how are you feeling?” etc.

Turn Questions into Comments

- Now turn your questions into comments. Remember that comments can be statements, observations, opinions, or instructions
- You can turn “what’s that?” or “what have you got there?” into “you’ve got a car!”
- You can turn “what are you doing?” or “what is teddy doing?” into “you’re jumping!” or “you’re playing with your toys!” or “Teddy is having a cup of tea!”
- You can turn “how are you?” or “how are you feeling?” into “you look sleepy!”, “you look happy!”, “you look excited!” or “you look upset!”
- You can turn “what do we do now?” into “now we put our coats on!”

Commenting During Play

- Commenting on what your child is doing during a play session is a great way to spend time with your child
- It is also a good opportunity to model relevant and motivating language to your child
- You can comment on what your child is looking at e.g. “it’s a blue car!”
- You can comment on what your child is doing e.g. “you’re jumping!”
- You can comment on what your child is making the toys do e.g. “the car is driving!”

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.

If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 0191 445 6129 (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday).

You can also email PALS at ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Mrs Trudie Davies,
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust,
Trust Headquarters,
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Sheriff Hill,
Gateshead,
NE9 6SX

The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews and Statistics.

Further information is available via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website ([Privacy - QE Gateshead](#)) or by contacting the Data Protection Officer by telephone on 0191 445 8418 or by email ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net.

**This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats
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