

Special Time: Early Social Communication

What is Special Time

Special time is time spent playing with your child. Special Time is when our child leads the activity, and we join in. It gives opportunities for us to help our child's speech and language development.

How do we do Special Time

- Special Time lasts for 5 minutes.
- Let your child to choose an activity, toy or game linked to their interests. This should not be reading a book, using a computer, tablet, electronic game, watching TV or lively outdoor games.
- Find a quiet room where you can play with your child on their own. Turn off the TV/ music/ radio.
- Play with your child. Join in with what they choose to do, rather than you leading the play.



Remember to **OWL**

Observe

Get down to your child's physical level. This might mean sitting on the floor or even lying down if you can.

Observe what your child is interested by.

Wait

Pause and wait to see what your child does. This lets them take the lead.

Listen

Notice how your child might be communicating. They might use a sound / movement / facial expression / gesture / action / word.

Then follow their lead and respond:

Respond to all the ways your child communicates - using your face, voice, and body language.

Copy your child's actions and sounds. This helps children learn about to and fro interactions.

Interpret by working out what your child is trying to communicate. Say the word that your child would say if they could.

Comment rather than question (Instead of asking "what's that?", describe what your child is seeing, doing, or feeling in the moment, without expecting an answer "bubbles!" "more!" "pop!" "let's go!"). You can comment using single words or simple phrases.

Find a regular time to do Special Time. You can also use the strategies in daily situations and routines.

You can also watch our [Early language special time video](#) on our YouTube channel.



Scan the qr code for our early language
special time video

www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk

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