



# Summer Talk

**Games and activities to support children's communication skills when you're out and about this summer**

# Summer talk

This August, you and your family may be spending lots of time together going out and about locally. You may even be planning exciting day trips or even going away on holiday.

Here at the Communication Trust, we know how important family time is. In this *Summer Talk* toolkit, you'll find a range of games and activities that are fun and easy to do whilst at the same time encouraging your children's communication skills.

We'd like to thank our partners from across the country who have contributed their brilliant ideas and activities to this toolkit as part of their support of *Hello (national year of communication)*.

Visit [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk) for further information, free resources and to sign up for regular updates.

## What's inside this pack?

- **Museum fun** – question ideas to start a conversation with your children.
- **Zoo fun!** – help your children learn the signs for different animals at the zoo and go exploring together.
- **Trolley challenge** – keep your kids amused in the supermarket and develop their language skills at the same time.
- **Car challenge** – exhausted by the thought of long journeys? Check out our ideas and challenges for journeys.
- **Picnic fun!** – take the family out for a teddy bears picnic and use songs and rhymes to develop communication skills.
- **Sports challenge** – take the classic game of 'throw and catch' to the next level.
- **Kitchen fun** – make a noisy lunch at home and get help from your children in the kitchen.
- **Top tips for communication with your child** – top tips to support children's speech, language and communication.
- **And there's more...** – useful websites with more games and activities that you can do with your children at home or out and about.



## Why communication?

It's easy to think that children's speech, language and communication develops no matter what. But this isn't true.

Speech, language and communication underpins everything we do, yet children don't learn to talk by accident.

Adults play a really important role in nurturing and supporting these skills. Listening to what children say, giving them ideas and creating opportunities for talk and interaction can make a big difference to children's ability to live life to the full.

# Museum trip

Museums are a great place to visit. You can be guaranteed there'll be things you'll see that you don't normally come across in your daily life, and for that reason it offers a lot to talk about.

Wherever you live you're likely to have a local museum nearby. Check out your local council website for details of your nearest.

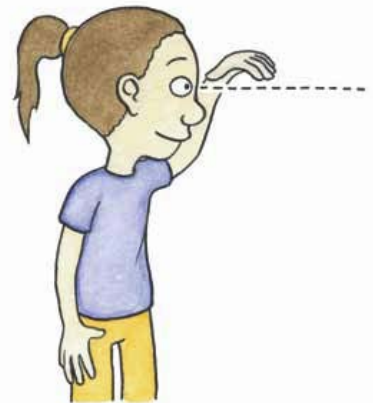
Many museums offer activities for children that are free or low cost. Why not combine a trip to the museum with a picnic in a local park? It's a perfect cheap day out.

## Activities to try

### Museum treasure hunt

Make a fun game searching out the following items and talk about what you find;

- What's the oldest thing you can find?
- Can you find something from faraway?
- What's the smallest exhibit you can find?
- What's the biggest exhibit you can find?
- What's the funniest looking item you can find?



### Become an inventor for the day!

Great questions to ask any budding inventor

- Imagine you're an inventor for the day - what would you invent?
- Tell me more about what your invention would look like?
- Tell me more about what it would do?
- How big is it?
- What is it made of?
- How does it work?
- Can you draw a picture of your invention?

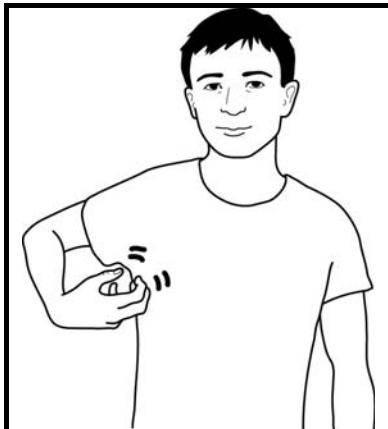
This fantastic activity comes from Fink (Family Interaction Nurtures Kids). Fink is passionate about communication and they're on a mission to get people talking. For more information log onto [www.finkcards.com](http://www.finkcards.com)

Fink has partnered with *Hello* for this month's 'talk and go' theme. During August they're offering 50% off any order when you quote HELLO online. You can also find free tips, advice, resources and expert blogs on helping your child become a confident communicator at [www.finkcards.co.uk/resources/blog](http://www.finkcards.co.uk/resources/blog)

# Zoo fun

A family trip to the zoo offers many things to talk, or sign about, and there's lots of fun to be had. Can you spot these as you walk around?

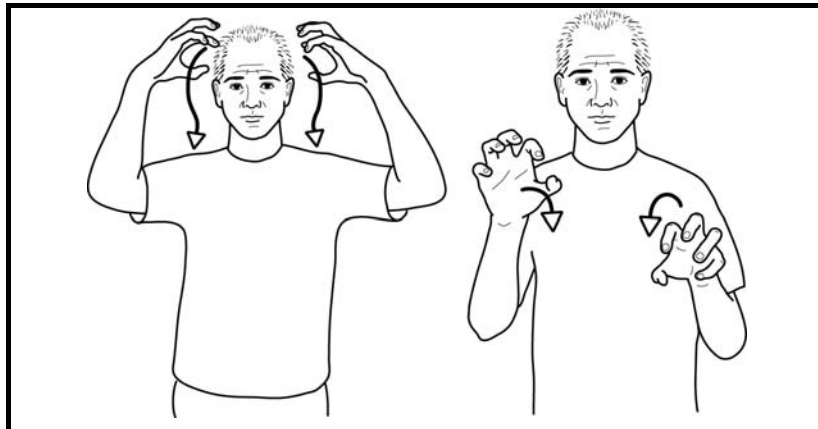
Monkey



Diagrams, text and descriptions ©SIGNALONG

Working clawed hand scratches under working arm.

Lion



Diagrams, text and descriptions ©SIGNALONG

Clawed hands (palms in, pointing up) outline mane and then make alternate clawing movements (palms forward, pointing up).

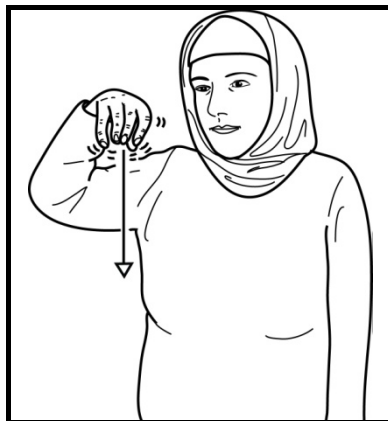
Snake



Diagrams, text and descriptions ©SIGNALONG

Working bunched hand (palm down, pointing forward) "snakes" forwards. Directional sign.

Spider



Diagrams, text and descriptions ©SIGNALONG

Working clawed hand (palm down, pointing forward) by side of head, moves down with fingers wriggling.

Giraffe



Diagrams, text and descriptions ©SIGNALONG

Pads of thumb, middle and third fingers of working hand touching, index and little fingers extended (palm in, pointing up); supporting cupped hand (palm back, pointing in) moves up and down working forearm.

# Trolley Challenge

Keep your children amused and develop their communication skills, as you go around the supermarket with the *Trolley Challenge*. You have a lot to think about as you shop, so here are some quick and easy things to do with your child at the same time, whatever their age. If you have children of different ages, swap the activities you do, so they all have a turn.

## 0 – 6 months

Every time you put something in your trolley – look at your baby. How many different faces does he/she make?

## 6 – 12 months

Every time you put something in your trolley – talk or make noises with your baby. How many noises does your baby make in return?

## 12 – 18 months

Every time you put something in your trolley – show it to your baby and tell them what it is

## 18 – 24 months

Every time you put something in your trolley – say the name of the object and add the word 'in', e.g. 'banana in'

## 24 – 36 months

Every time you put something in your trolley – say the name of the object and add a describing word, e.g. 'big banana'

## 3 – 4 years

Every time you put something in your trolley – clap out the syllables in the word, e.g. ba/na/na = 3 claps

## 4 – 5 years

Every time you put something in your trolley – ask your child to tell you 2 things about it, e.g. banana – 'it's yellow and you eat it'



This *Trolley Challenge* activity comes from Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust. You can find out more about their work at [www.slc.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.slc.cambridgeshire.gov.uk). This site includes excellent activities and information to support parents and carers.

# Car challenge

Exhausted at the thought of keeping your kids amused on a long journey? Try these activities to ensure travel time is fun and educational rather than a stressful experience for everyone involved!

## Present time

Wrap up little presents for children to open at certain times on long journeys. These can be cheap and simple things such as a box of raisins, pipe cleaners to play with, crayons or travel game like *Guess Who*. The excitement is in guessing what's inside! Get children to describe the shape of the parcel; whether it's soft or hard, what they think might be inside and why.

## Guess the character

You describe a character from a TV programme, a film or book and the children have to guess who you're talking about. Then they describe someone and you guess.

## I Spy

This can be with things you can actually see or even things that you're thinking of. For young children, describe the object as well as giving the first letter of what you're thinking about.

## Registration plate challenge

Make up silly phrases based on the registration plates of vehicles you pass: C989 VAE = Very Amazing Elephants

## Let's pretend

Pretend your car's a different vehicle (such as a submarine) and make up a story about it. 'The submarine is being chased by three pink hammerhead sharks.' Take turns to add the next sentence or part of the story so that everyone in the car adds something.



## Passenger maths

Give a number to people and animals in cars that you pass e.g.:

1 for a man

2 for a woman

3 for a child

4 for a pet

Take turns and keep your score. The first to get to an agreed number of points, e.g. 50 or more, wins the game.

## Car football

Everyone in the car chooses an unusual type of vehicle (like a tractor), or a less common colour of vehicle (yellow), or a specific type of lorry (like a Sainsbury's lorry). Whoever sees their chosen vehicle coming towards them scores a goal, but if the car overtakes a chosen vehicle everyone else scores a goal. Once someone has seen or overtaken their chosen vehicle, they have to pick a different one.

# Picnic fun

Why not go to the park on a sunny day for a Teddy Bear's Picnic and use songs and rhymes to help develop your children's communication skills. Here are a few for you to try

## To the tune of 'Drunken sailor'

*What do we need when we go on a picnic?  
What do we need when we go on a picnic?  
What do we need when we go on a picnic,  
on a sunny morning?  
Lots of apples and chocolate biscuits  
Lots of apples and chocolate biscuits  
Lots of apples and chocolate biscuits  
on a sunny morning*

Children can suggest ideas and you can mime actions eating the different foods



## Spoken rhymes

*Chop chop choppety chop  
Chop off the bottom and chop off the top  
What you have left – you can eat the lot!  
Chop chop choppety chop*

You can accompany this with drums, rhythm sticks etc (beating in time with pulse of the rhyme in a chopping action)

*Slice slice the bread looks nice  
Spread spread butter on the bread  
On the top we'll put some ham/cheese/jam etc  
Make it tasty for your Ted*  
(as in a teddy bear's picnic)

Accompany with a spreading action





## To the tune of 'Frere Jacques'

*Lick your ice cream  
Lick your ice cream  
With your tongue  
With your tongue  
It's all sweet and sticky  
It's all sweet and sticky  
Yum, yum, yum! Yum, yum, yum!*



## To the tune of 'The sun has got his hat on'

*The sun has got his hat on, hip hip hip hooray  
The sun has got his hat on and he's coming out to play  
We have got our hats on, hip hip hip hooray  
We have got our hats on and we're coming out to play  
We have got our sun cream on, hip hip hip hooray  
We have got our cream on and we're coming out to play*



## To the tune of 'Here we go round the mulberry bush'

*Here we go round the picnic rug,  
the picnic rug, the picnic rug.  
Here we go round the picnic rug,  
on a sunny morning.  
This is the way we...  
peel an orange/ bite an apple/ drink our juice etc  
on a sunny morning.*

Children hold hands and walk in a circle round the picnic rug, then do appropriate actions for each verse

*We're going on a picnic, leaving right away  
If it doesn't rain we'll stay all day  
Have you got the sandwiches?  
Yes I've got the sandwiches  
Have you got the bananas?  
Yes I've got the bananas etc  
Going on a picnic on a sunny day.*

Children provide the answers to the 'Have you got the...?' questions.



This fantastic activity is part of a Communication Picnic Pack developed by Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust and Children's Speech and Language Therapy team. Inspired to download the Communication Picnic Pack? Log onto [www.hello.org.uk/talkandgo](http://www.hello.org.uk/talkandgo)

# Sports challenge

Even a simple game of 'catch and throw' can be turned into an opportunity for fun and communication. *Over the Line* is a throwing and catching game that's a doddle to set up and a delight to play.

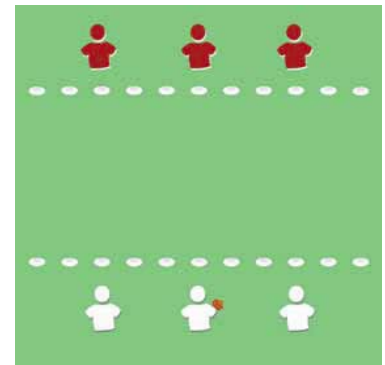
## What you'll need:

A ball you can throw, like a tennis ball and some cones.

You can play *Over the Line* with different numbers of players but 3 a side are ideal.



- Start by marking out 2 lines say 10 metres long and 10 metres apart (see the diagram below). You can alter the distances once you've seen how well your children can throw.
- The space between the lines is out of play.
- Get the 2 teams to stand behind their lines. The red team starts and a player throws the ball from a few paces behind their line. The aim is to throw the ball so it lands in the opponent's area anywhere behind the line.
- Once it's crossed the line the whites try to catch the ball or at least touch it before it lands.
- If the ball hits the ground without being caught or touched, the throwing team gets a point.
- If someone in the receiving team catches the ball, they get a point. If they touch the ball but don't catch it, then nobody gets a point.
- The player who catches or touches the ball, must throw it back from where they were standing.
- If the ball hits the ground to score a point, the nearest player to where it landed takes the next turn from that spot.



As well as helping children build their throwing and catching skills, the game also teaches them something about tactics. That's because how you position your players is an important part of playing the game well.

BT sponsored the *Hello* campaign. *Over the Line* is one of 12 *Coaching for Life* resources, developed as part of BT's official London Olympics 2012 education programme. Parents and carers are encouraged to get their children (6-11 year olds) to try different sports and to give them opportunities for communication.

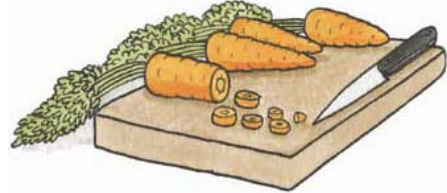
Find out more at [www.bt.com/coachingforlife](http://www.bt.com/coachingforlife). You'll find downloadable instructions for all 12 games, along with videos of how to play. There are also downloadable coaching tips, a coaching tips video and information on the iTunes *Coaching for Life* app.

# Kitchen fun

If you find yourself at home this summer, why not get the family together in the kitchen? Making a noisy lunch together is an excellent opportunity for talking and having fun.

Have fun in the kitchen with your children

Make a noisy lunch together, talking and copying the sounds you hear. Encourage children to learn vocabulary by introducing new equipment and unusual foods.



Here are some ideas:

## Listen to the sounds

- Listen to the sounds in the kitchen.
- Talk about and copy the sounds of different kitchen utensils and equipment:

Metal spoons

Food processor

Knives chopping

## Listen to the sounds

Take turns to talk about the different sounds you make as you eat.

Chewing slurping, munching and crunching!



Guess the noise:

1. Pick a noisy utensil or piece of equipment in the kitchen
2. Tell your child to close their eyes and listen carefully
3. Make a noise e.g. chop on a board
4. Get your child to open their eyes and make a guess
5. If they're wrong, do it again and then show them

This *Noisy Kitchen* activity was adapted from a 0-5s activity resource written by Humber NHS Foundation Trust, in conjunction with Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Families Information Hub Service (FISH). You can also find other kitchen activities from our *Hello* partners at [www.hello.org.uk/talkandgo](http://www.hello.org.uk/talkandgo)

# Top tips for communicating with your child

Below are some top tips for communication development when you are out and about this summer.

- Talk about the things your child is interested in. For example, if they're playing on the slide in the park, go over and comment 'weeee you're sliding down'
- Use comments and prompts to keep the conversation up. They're better than questions for keeping children involved. For example, if your child is eating an ice-cream, comment, 'Mmm, that looks good. I love ice-cream.' They can then respond with more words than if you ask 'What's that you're eating?'
- Put aside time each day for talking together
- If your child doesn't get it quite right the first time, don't say "that's wrong", say it back the right way. For example, if your child says, "I goed swimming", just say back to them, "yes you did, you *went* swimming.'
- Explore words - talk about new words when your child comes across one
- Enjoy conversations with your child - children learn from conversations with adults as much as their friends
- Comment on your child's play using simple language, such as "horse jumping", "man eating orange"
- Ask your child to follow simple instructions, for example feed a teddy, and see if they can copy
- Remember to **OWL!** 1) **O**bserve your child 2) **W**ait for them to interact with you 3) **L**isten to their responses to you
- Extend what your child is saying by one more word than they can say. If they say "soup please" you say "tomato soup please". Or if they say "want soup please" you say "Hannah wants soup please"
- If you're doing any activity, it can be a good idea to do the same thing beforehand so that children know what to expect. For example making sandwiches for a picnic. You could also recap the activity after you've done it. This helps to develop children's ability to understand and say the words involved in the activity, because you'll be repeating them.
- **Most importantly - have fun!**



**If you're concerned about your child's communication, log onto Talking Point ([www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)) and use the 'progress checker'. You can also find your nearest speech and language therapy services using the postcode searchable database.**

These tips have been provided by both Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and Oxfordshire County Council, and Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust. They have been adapted from their summer resources *Make the most of your summer* and *Communication Picnic Pack*. To find out more on these, go to [www.hello.org.uk/talkandgo](http://www.hello.org.uk/talkandgo)

# Useful websites

To keep up to date with The Communication Trust, visit and bookmark [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

If you want more ideas for how to keep your children entertained, have a look at the following:

## Fink

[www.finkcards.co.uk](http://www.finkcards.co.uk)

Helps families improve communication with cards and games that get families talking.

## Talk to your Baby

[www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk/home](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk/home) and [www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk/partypack4](http://www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk/partypack4)

Ideas on having a party, tips for communicating with your children, fun stuff to do such as stories to watch, rhymes to sing and also downloadable activity sheets e.g. sheets for colouring.

## Family Time

[www.familytime.co.uk](http://www.familytime.co.uk)

A whole range of ideas for activities both indoors and outside, with examples of activities to download, recipes for baking, competitions and more.

## National Deaf Children's Society

[www.familysignlanguage.org.uk](http://www.familysignlanguage.org.uk)

Fun and friendly website for families of deaf children to learn British Sign Language (BSL) and to give practical advice on how to use BSL at home this summer.

[www.buzz.org.uk](http://www.buzz.org.uk)

Information for deaf children and young people to let them know what is going on in their area over the summer. It has two sections, one for ages 8-11 and another for ages 12-18.

## Makaton

[www.makaton.org/khxc/gbu0-catshow/children-play.html](http://www.makaton.org/khxc/gbu0-catshow/children-play.html)

Ideas for games and activities to help children to use Makaton, informally and spontaneously.

## BBC

[www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/thingstodo](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/thingstodo)

Has a wide range of creative activities to do at home for rainy days. There are arts and crafts activities, ideas for dressing up, colouring in and more.

## Netmums

[www.netmums.com](http://www.netmums.com)

Parenting advice, information and events in your local area.

## Mumsnet

[www.mumsnet.com](http://www.mumsnet.com)

News, special offers, competitions and information in your local area.

## Change4Life

[www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/fun-generator.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/fun-generator.aspx)

Contains lots of activities to do over the summer.