

# How is talking and listening taught?

Talking and listening play a vital role in all learning. Talking and listening are given the same importance in the classroom as reading and writing.

*Focus on literacy: Talking and listening* outlines the approach to the teaching of talking and listening in government schools from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Learning to speak and listen effectively is a lifelong process of learning about language and using language for social, cultural and academic purposes.

## Talking is used for:

- interacting with others
- thinking aloud
- working out ideas
- considering possibilities
- building on the responses of others.

At school students learn and practise their skills in talking and listening and share their experiences and new learning. They do this in:

- pair work, group work, whole class discussions
- report-back sessions
- debates
- guided small group discussion
- formal presentations.

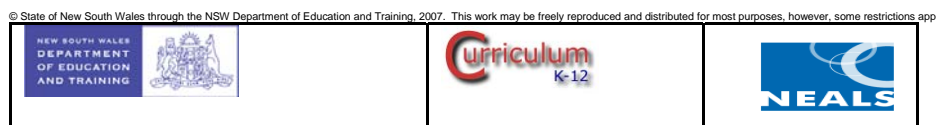
Students always need to develop ways of sharing ideas, and ways to listen to others, clear up any misunderstanding, change the topic and present another viewpoint.

## My child already talks and listens

Most children can speak well when they begin preschool or Kindergarten. They already understand that they can use language in different ways for different situations. For example: talking to friends, asking for something or telling someone what happened. We use language differently at home, at work, at school and with friends. At school students learn even more ways of using language appropriately depending on their topic, the audience and their purpose.

## But my child talks too much!

Successful interaction is often “invisible” when it works well and highly visible when it doesn’t. If your child regularly uses such tactics such as talking over the top of someone else, getting louder, repeating information in an exasperated tone or preventing others from contributing, invite them to think of other ways that might be more successful for both them and the listener. You are not likely to achieve positive results when a child is emotional, tired or hungry, so this requires thoughtful timing.





# How can I help?

## Talk about talking and listening

If you speak a language other than English at home, it is important that you continue to support your child in maintaining the home language. Being able to speak more than one language is a good thing.

The following suggestions apply to languages and dialects other than English, as well as English.

- Encourage your child to talk about different topics. If you are unfamiliar with the topic, let your child know that they will need to give you more information.
- Don't talk down to children. Talk at a normal pace and volume and use ordinary language. Pay the compliment of expecting them to understand your conversation with them.

- Encourage your child to tell you about events which did not involve you. This helps students work out what a listener needs to know and prepares them for writing.
- Try not to ask too many yes/no questions. Ask your child questions that require more lengthy use of language.
- Encourage your child to listen to and share their ideas with people from various backgrounds and age groups. This will give them more experience in communicating. Children can sometimes be disadvantaged by interacting only with people who share their views.
- Encourage your child to explain their reasoning to you when they are making decisions. Listen and respond in ways that promote further thinking aloud rather than ending the conversation with your opinion.
- Where possible and appropriate, give your child opportunities to make appointments and use the telephone.

- Talk with your child about the things you do together such as reading, using the computer, watching videos and socialising. Younger children may sometimes take a few hours to respond to some topics you have started.
- Use any available opportunities to encourage purposeful talking and active listening. Show by your behaviour that you are listening, not just hearing. Build on your child's responses.

*Talk about talking and listening. They still remain the most effective way to communicate. Demonstrate that you are still learning too!*

