Barts Health **NHS**

NHS Trust

SPECIAL TIME!

FIRST STEP IN HELPING YOUR CHILD COMMUNICATE BETTER!

How do I do it?

1. Sit face to face where it is easy for the child to see you.
2. Follow what the child wants to do – don't try to take over.
3. Give the child time to talk and wait for them to start talking.
4. Listen to what the child is saying and talk about what they are doing.
5. Talk slowly, using actions to help the child understand. Try not to ask too many questions.
6. Expand on the child's utterances by adding 1-2 words to what they say e.g. if child says 'car' you say 'driving car' and do the actions of 'driving car'.
7. Repeat key words to help the child understand.
8. Imitate the actions or sounds or words that the child makes.
9. Praise the child often.

Why should I do it?

Special time is a way for the child to build on their language and play skills in their own time. The child can develop their confidence in communicating and have a chance to take the lead in interaction and play. Aim to do 'Special Time' for 5-10 minutes each day.

TOP TIP! Try using Special Time in everyday routines e.g. bath time, bed time, dinner time etc.!

IDEAS!

Everyday routines

e.g. meal times

When you are sitting down at the table for a meal, watch what the child is doing. When your child looks at you, smile back at him/her and label what they are eating and point to it – 'carrot', 'yummy'!

Play Time

Sit opposite the child and watch what they are doing with the toys. Sometimes, your child may just be looking/playing with their fingers! Copy what your child is doing with their fingers. When your child looks to you, label what they are doing – 'fingers!', 'silly fingers' and tickle them!

At the park… going for a walk… or grocery shopping? When you are going to fetch an older child from school or going to the grocery shops – use these opportunities to model language to your child e.g. if your child is looking at something on the shelf, tune in, pick up the item, show it to your child and label it e.g. banana, pasta, biscuit, juice, shoe, flowers etc.