A summary of listening and speaking skills

We use speaking for:
explaining       discussing       persuading
asking questions giving reports   sharing
answering questions giving instructions exploring ideas
 telling stories       arguing        reflecting
describing events

To be successful speakers we need to:
• know procedures i.e. introductions, phone calls
• demonstrate social conventions i.e. look at speaker, wait for turn to speak, accept and encourage others
• speak confidently
• be aware of our audience
• use correct tone and style
• use volume appropriate to the situation
• use facial expressions and gestures
• be able to speak to large or small groups

We use the following types of listening:
• appreciative—for enjoyment and relaxation
• purposeful—for accuracy, attending to one person or sound
• discriminative—for gaining specific information
• analytical—for gaining specific information and giving a response
• marginal—listening when there are distractions in the background

To be successful listeners we need to:
• value listening—prevent interruptions when others are listening
• attend to the speaker
• try to eliminate distractions
• engage in conversation (practising listening and speaking)
How to help your child with speaking and listening

Encourage...
your child to exchange greetings and farewells in various situations, such as making friends and introducing themselves, e.g. 'Hello, I'm Gina. What's your name?'

Show...
your child how to use the telephone. Teach them what to say when they answer the telephone and how to take a message.

Sing...
jingles, rhymes, songs. Say poems and chants together. Read favourite rhymes and stories aloud with lots of expression.

Practise...
following directions and giving instructions, e.g. cooking, using Make and Do books.

Model...
the use of nodding and eye contact etc. to show how to be an active listener.

Encourage...
your child to experiment with voice intonation and expression. Role play characters from favourite stories, e.g. re-enacting story time at school. A few dress-up items will help.

Provide...
a range of toys and material that will encourage talk and description, e.g. blocks, playdough, jigsaws, soft toys. 'What have you made?'

Taken from 'How to help your child with Speaking and Listening' 1995, Opening Doors Parent Information Kit for the Early Years of Schooling, Department of Education, Victoria
Handout 2.3 (continued)

Ask questions ...
about events and allow time before expecting a response, e.g. ‘What did you do today? Did you have show and tell?’ Encourage your child to ask questions to find out things.

Share ...
retellings of events, promoting sequence and accuracy, e.g. ‘What happened after that? What was the next thing you did?’

Suggest ...
ideas for show and tell and encourage a rehearsal of what your child will say and do.

Compare ...
the way in which we speak to others in formal and informal situations, e.g. show and tell, playing with friends, meeting new adults.

Listen ...
to taped stories with read-along books. Tape your own stories and retellings, make your own books to go with them.

Play ...
listening and speaking games, e.g. ‘I spy’.

Encourage ...
your child to wait for an appropriate time to speak. Discourage interruptions.

Model ...
standard speech and encourage your child to attempt appropriate patterns, e.g. ‘I go park.’ ‘Yes, we will go to the park.’
How can I help my child with writing?

Provide ...
a range of materials to encourage writing, drawing and publishing, e.g. pencils, markers, paper, scissors, paste, old magazines.

Write together ...
Make your own shopping list and encourage your child to make theirs, too. When you write to family and friends, encourage your child to add a piece to cards, letters and messages.

Explore ...
the various ways in which we write, e.g. ‘Can you write some directions for me so that I can make a dinosaur like yours?’

Read and write ...
your own maps, posters and information brochures to show the different ways of writing.

Discuss ...
various types of writing in the books you have at home, e.g. ‘This book gives us information. This one is a funny story. Can you find the speech balloons in this book?’

Experiment ...
with the way written language works by reading and writing out familiar poems, songs, rhymes.
Handout 4.3 (continued)

Praise ...
all attempts at writing and spelling. Talk about what your child has written, have your child point to the writing and talk about the message it carries.

Demonstrate ...
how you write by recording the message too. Explain what you are doing as you write, e.g. ‘I start my writing on this side of the page. I’m making gaps between the words. This is what I want to say.’

Let your child ...
observe what you do when you try to spell unknown words, e.g. say it, write it down, try again, check it with a friend or in a dictionary/word book.

Ask ...
your child to read their work to other people, such as a friend or neighbour.

Look ...
for your child’s work in class books that are brought home to share.

Identify ...
letters and words around you. Play with letters of the alphabet, find letters and words in magazines that are of significance, e.g. ‘That letter is in your name. That’s the way you spell my name.’
Prompts for spelling strategies

When the child asks ‘How do you spell…?’,
encourage the child to HAVE A GO first.

Then:

Say the word slowly. What sounds do you hear?
What letters might you use to make that sound?

Circle the part of the word you think is wrong.
What else do you think might go here?

You know how to spell ball. How do you think you
would spell small?

Where else might you find the word?
Open Ended Questions

- Ask open-ended questions—questions that require more than one word to answer. Use How? When? Why? What? to begin questions. Examples of effective question starters:
  - How will you make the cover of your book?
  - What happened after...?
  - List all of the...
  - How did...?
  - Tell me...
  - Think of all the...
  - How many ways can...?
  - Suppose a...
  - What would you say if...?
  - Why is...?
  - How did you feel when...? etc.
- Pause, wait for answers—wait a few moments for thinking time before expecting an answer
- Give prompts—give a hint or lead to encourage a response e.g. What do you think about...?
- Rephrase while supporting the attempt—the helper provides the correct language structure for the child by accepting and then rephrasing what is said e.g. Child: ‘What I do next?’, Helper: ‘What can you do next? Let’s read the instructions together to see what’s next’.
- Be an active listener—show how to be an active listener by watching the person who is speaking. Listen without interrupting, nod, smile and use facial expressions where appropriate to encourage the speaker and demonstrate that you are listening. Similarly, frown and show that you are upset if the need arises.
- Offer praise—use a variety of encouraging words and phrases to support children with their attempts. e.g. ‘I like that way you...’, ‘That’s great, well done, terrific work’.
Learning words

If a word is used regularly by the child in writing, provide help with learning to spell the word after writing.

Ask the child to:
• look at the whole word carefully
• close their eyes and picture the word in their mind
• say the word and trace it in the air
• say the word again
• write the word
• check their spelling with the correct word.