

Ten point plan for parents – how to use technology as an communication opportunity

1. Use technology with your child to keep in touch with distant relatives or friends. Email, send photos or even Skype to keep in touch and use it as an opportunity to ask your child what they might want to ask and say.
2. Have a family games tournament. Challenge your children to a tournament, adults versus children – be prepared to be beaten! So many opportunities for fun and interaction.
3. With your children, draw up your own top ten games. These can be consol games , online or even phone apps – decide between you what would be your top ten and why. Give them the opportunity to develop and hone those negotiation and persuasion skills to decide which one wins – make them work for it!
4. Play ‘name that tune’. Download from YouTube tunes they will know – maybe film tracks, nursery rhymes or pop classics. Play the first few bars – who can name the tune? This is really good for developing listening skills.
5. Look together at the photos you’ve saved or posted – can your child remember the story behind the photo? See if you can find a similar photo of when you were young. Talk about the differences and similarities – this exercise is great for sharing stories, which are so vital for communication development.
6. Play ‘name that movie / TV programme’. Play a scene from a movie or show a clip of TV from the internet or IPlayer – can they name the movie / TV programme from a familiar scene? Talk about what helped them guess – this is good as it makes children tune in to key pieces of information.
7. Get your children to take photos of themselves, family members or friends to make their own photo albums for their room or even a ‘mugs gallery’. Plan together what will be in their album. Who do they need photos of? How are they are going to set it out? This is good for children as it uses language to organise their thinking.
8. Use the internet together to research what happened in the world on the day your child was born. Compare it to the day you were born – talk about any similarities or differences?
9. Get your child to teach you how to use an aspect of technology. This is great for learning as children get to give instructions. Maybe they could explain ‘technology speak’ or emoticon symbols.
10. Remember, it’s OK to turn technology off! Sometimes the best way to encourage children is to model it as a parent. Communication technology is great, but face to face conversations can be even more rewarding. To download or order FREE games and activities that develop children’s communication, log onto

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources