

# Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Helping a Late Talker: Your Step-by-Step Home Program

inclusivetherapycentre.com · +92 314 6040262

✳️ Written by the Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center therapy team · **medically reviewed by Dr Muhammad Suffyan**, MB BS (GMC 8023727) · Last reviewed July 2026

## ✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. Help your child understand more, say more words, and enjoy communicating. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

If your toddler isn't talking yet, the most useful thing you can change today isn't a toy, an app or a box of flashcards — it's the way the two of you take turns. Children learn to talk from warm, face-to-face, back-and-forth moments with the people who love them, and those moments are already in your day: meals, bath time, the walk to the shop. Quietly waiting for words to arrive on their own is the one approach that rarely helps. This page is one of our free **parent-led home programs**, and it asks for a few unhurried minutes a day rather than any special equipment.

Parents nearly always ask us the same first question: is this a late talker, or a speech delay? Therapists use a rough guide, never a test — babbling, pointing and waving by around a year; a handful of single words by around eighteen months; roughly fifty words and the first two-word joins, like “more milk” or “Baba go”, by the second birthday. A child who sits behind that guide but understands well, plays happily and communicates with gestures is usually called a late talker — understanding nearly always runs ahead of speaking, which is the difference

between **receptive and expressive language**. It becomes a speech or language delay when the gap doesn't close, or when understanding is affected too. Nobody can tell you which one you have from a single afternoon — and that is exactly why doing something at home and watching what changes beats waiting another six months. Here is the rough pattern therapists have in mind, age by age.

### What talking usually looks like

12 m

**Babbles, points, waves**  
a first word may appear

18 m

**A handful of single words**  
still leaning hard on gestures

2 yr

**About 50 words, two joined**  
“more milk”, “Baba go”

3 yr

**Short sentences**  
family follows most of it

A rough guide, not a test — children vary.  
Clearly behind it? A check is easy and kind.

What follows is the routine Mahnoor Baloch, our Speech & Language Therapist, hands a parent after a first session at our centre on MPS Road in Model Town, Multan. It is free, it folds into things you already do rather than sitting on top of them, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment where one is needed. For a lot of children it gives talking the gentle nudge it has been waiting for, and it never does any harm. If you would like a therapist watching alongside you, you can **book a consultation with our team** and carry on with the weeks below in the meantime.

### گھر پر آج یہ کریں

اردو • Urdu

دیر سے بولنے والے چھوٹے بچے کو الفاظ سیکھنے اور بات چیت شروع کرنے میں مدد دیں۔

بچے کے آمنے سامنے، اُس کی آنکھوں کی سیدھ میں بیٹھ کر بات کریں۔

جو چیز بچہ دیکھ رہا ہو اُس کا نام صاف اور بار بار بولیں، جیسے ”گیند“، ”پانی“۔

بچہ جو آواز نکالے اُسے دہرائیں اور ساتھ ایک لفظ بڑھا دیں۔

دو چیزوں کا انتخاب دیں ”پانی یا دودھ؟“ اور بچے کے جواب کا اطمینان سے انتظار کریں۔

## ♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Toddlers who are slower than you'd expect to start using words
- ✓ Two-year-olds with fewer than about fifty words, or who aren't yet joining two words together
- ✓ Children who clearly understand you but say very little back
- ✓ Little ones who point, tug your hand or gesture instead of talking
- ✓ Families waiting for a speech and language assessment, or who can't easily get to one — parents further out can read our local guidance for Layyah and Lodhran
- ✓ Any parent who wants something practical to do while they wait

## ⚡ Important — when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

Your child was talking and has lost words or skills they used to have

No babbling, pointing or gestures by around 12–15 months

No single words by 18 months, or no two-word phrases by around 2 years

Your child seems not to hear you, or had frequent coughs, colds and ear infections

Little response to their own name, and little interest in faces or shared play

By three, your child still uses single words only, or close family struggle to understand them

You feel in your gut that something isn't right

### **Getting help where you live**

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local to you:

**Work with us online, from anywhere.** We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search **“child speech & language therapist near me”**, or ask your doctor for a referral.

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Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here**.

### **Your step-by-step roadmap**

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

## Week 1 – Get face to face

Make yourself easy to watch and copy.

Get right down to your child's eye level to play and chat — on the floor together, or face to face across the table.

Follow their lead: play with whatever's caught their eye, rather than steering them towards your idea of fun.

Say your bit, then pause and wait — give a full five seconds for any kind of response at all.

Switch off the television and put your phone out of reach for those few minutes.

 **Try** Sit facing your child, not beside them — when they can watch your **this:** mouth, the sounds come far more easily. Those moments of looking at the same thing together are what therapists mean by joint attention, and they come before words.

## Week 2 – Talk about the here and now

Put simple words to whatever your child is doing.

Narrate the play in short bursts — “car go”, “big splash”, “teddy up”.

Describe what you are doing as you do it, then what your child is doing — therapists call these self-talk and parallel talk, and they give a child words for the exact moment they're living in.

Stay one step ahead: if they use no words, model single ones; if they've got single words, put two together.

Name whatever they look at or reach for, the very moment they show interest.

 **Try** Less really is more — a flood of long sentences is far harder to copy **this:** than one clear word said warmly, over and over.

## Week 3 – Build in reasons to communicate

Gently create little moments where talking is worth the effort.

Offer a choice: hold up two things and ask “milk or water?”, then wait.

Pop a favourite toy in sight but out of reach, so they have to ask you — in any way at all — for help.

Pause partway through familiar songs and routines, and let them fill the gap.

Cut back on questions. A child who is asked “what’s this?” all day learns that talking is a test; a child who hears “oh, a ball!” learns a word.

 **Try** Accept ANY attempt — a sound, a point, a glance — then say the word **this:** for them and hand the thing straight over.

## Week 4 – Expand and repeat

Grow what they say, and keep it fun.

When your child offers a word, echo it back and add one more — they say “ball”, you say “big ball”.

Once single words are steady, model the first two-word joins all day: “more juice”, “Baba gone”, “shoes on”.

Share simple books every day, but chat about the pictures rather than only reading the words.

Sing the same few action songs daily — repetition is exactly how words stick.

 **Try** Repeat new words over and over across the day — children often need **this:** to hear a word many, many times before it comes out of their own mouth. Books are the easiest place to do it: reading to build language works best as a chat about the pictures, not a performance.

## Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Switch off any background TV — quiet makes your voice easier to pick out and copy.
- ✓ Use gestures and simple signs alongside your words; they support talking, they don't hold it back.
- ✓ Treat every attempt as if it were a full sentence — that's what gives a child the nerve to try again.
- ✓ Slow your own speech down a touch and lean on the key words.
- ✓ Keep it playful and never a test — "say it!" demands nearly always backfire.
- ✓ Two languages at home is absolutely fine; it doesn't cause delay, so keep speaking the language you know best.
- ✓ Ask your child's doctor about a hearing check — clear hearing is the ground that talking is built on, and hearing difficulties can be quiet and easy to miss.
- ✓ A few short, focused play times beat a whole day of talking at your child from across the room.

### **How you'll know it's working**

- Your child looks at you and takes more turns during play
- More copying — a sound, an action, a word — than a few weeks ago
- More gestures, sounds and attempts to reach you, even before the words are clear
- A slowly growing list of words they understand, and then start to use
- The first two words joined together, usually weeks or months after single words settle
- More enjoyment of shared books, songs and simple games



**Is this based on real methods?** The everyday techniques here — following the child's lead, modelling language just above their level, and building in reasons to communicate — are the foundation of well-established parent-coaching approaches such as the Hanen Centre's programmes, and reflect Cochrane

evidence that parent-delivered speech and language support can be as effective as clinician-delivered support.

✔ **Educational information, not a diagnosis.** Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

#### — FAQ

## Help Your Child Talk: questions parents ask