Oral Language is an important way we connect with other people, build relationships and share our thoughts and feelings. This social function is essential to human existence and in itself is an important reason for developing oral language.

As a parent, you are your child’s first teacher and their oral language development starts with you at home.

A study by Hart & Risley has shown that the most important aspect of children’s oral language experience is its amount. They also found that children’s academic successes at ages nine and ten are attributable to the amount of talk they hear from birth to age three.

The variation in children’s IQs and language abilities is relative to the amount parents speak to their children.

It’s never too early or too late to start talking to your child, and because babies can communicate before they start talking, they understand what you’re saying long before they are able to speak!

Talking and listening to children from the moment they’re born builds their base of receptive language abilities while developing good language and communication skills.

- Don’t be afraid to use baby-talk – it helps babies understand how language is put together.
- Sing to your child
- Talk to your child about the everyday things you’re doing and seeing together. For example, ‘Let’s get the washing now’, ‘Look at the red bird’ or ‘Yum, what a nice lunch we’re having’.
- Name people and point out special features on different objects (for example, the Velcro on shoes or buttons on a shirt).
- Talk about feelings, chatting about whether your child is happy or sad. You can help out by giving them the words to describe their emotions. This can help them understand how others feel, too.
- Listen to your child. Follow their lead and talk about things they bring up. If they ask a question, give them the chance to come up with answers before you step in.
- Tell your child stories. You could share funny or interesting stories from your childhood or tell him about your family’s past.

Risdon Park Primary School supports oral language development Reception to Year 2 through the use of Play boxes. This allows students the opportunity to develop new subject specific vocabulary, for example medical and transport related words. Ask your child’s teacher if you would like to learn how you can help or if you would like to know more.