**GAMES AND ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP LANGUAGE THROUGH PLAY**

***Teddy/dolly play*** – encourages all sorts of learning. Make them have a tea party. Give teddy a wash and brush and make her go to school, or play with dolly. Talk about what teddy is doing.

***Feely bags*** – Put several toys into a bag and ask your child to see what they can find – children love exploring and finding things. Name each object your child finds and talk about its different colour, size, shape, what the object does. Then see if the child can find one of the objects.

***Noise makers –***

1. It is very important that children develop listening skills in order to learn, even when they are in school. You can start to develop this by having two identical tins and putting a ball in one of the tins. Then shake both tins at the same time, one in either hand. Can the child find which tin has the ball in it by the noise? Then use a ball and a raisin/small sweet. Can the child tell by the different sound which tin still has the ball in it?

2. Collect a set of identical noise makers, e.g. 2 yoghurt pots with beans or rice in, and 2 bells. Shake one and see if the child can make the same sound. First do this so the child can see which noise maker you are shaking. Then try hiding your noise makers; can the child make the same sound?

***Fetching games*** – Find several toys and place them around the room, naming each object. Ask your child to find one. When your child can find one, ask them to fetch two toys, e.g. “find the brick and the cup.” If they can do this, then ask your child to find three objects. This will help to develop memory skills.

***Shopping games*** – This is similar to the fetching game. Ask your child to buy objects for teddy. You could ask your child to buy an object by its functional use or shape or size, e.g. “can you find something we drink with?” or “can you buy something that is round and give it to teddy.”

***Animals*** – Find toy animals and teach your child the different sounds that they make, e.g., a cow goes ‘moo’. See if your child can find animals when you make the noise. Then reverse the roles so your child makes the sound and you have to find the animal. This will help to develop listening skills as well as understanding animal names.

***Posting box*** – Use an empty cereal box, cut a hole in it and draw on it a post box. Find some pictures and see if your child can “post the cup” or “the girl jumping” from a choice of 3 or 4 pictures. When they can do this, ask your child which pictures you should post. In these two activities described, the child is learning the names of objects and action words.

***Nursery rhymes*** – Tell your child nursery rhymes. Children not yet talking will love the sound of your voice, and those children who are talking will enjoy repeating them with you. Rhyme is an important early reading skill. It helps the child to listen carefully to the different sounds that make up words.

***Books*** – Encourage your child to look at books as early as possible. Very young children will love just looking at the pictures and you talking about them. Slightly older ones will enjoy listening to the story and talking about what is happening. You can ask your child what happened or what will happen next. And the sooner your child begins to enjoy looking at books the sooner they will start to want to read them.