

From First Words to Full Sentences

Helping your child use English at home does not need to be difficult. Short, playful moments can help children grow in confidence and begin using English naturally.

Use this checklist to help your child practise English at home in a relaxed and positive way. One-word answers are welcome. Short sentences can come later.

1. Help first words become sentences

When your child says one word in English, gently model a short sentence.

You do not need to correct every mistake. Instead, give your child a clear example they can hear and copy when they are ready.

If your child says...	You can model...
red	It is red.
blue	It is blue.
dog	It is a dog.
cat	It is a cat.
bag	This is my bag.
apple	I want an apple, please.
water	I want water, please.
happy	I am happy.
tired	I am tired.
five	I am five.
friend	This is my friend.
teacher	This is my teacher.

Parent tip

Your child does not need to repeat the sentence perfectly. Hearing the sentence many times is already helpful.

Try to keep your voice warm and encouraging. The goal is to help your child feel confident, not tested.

2. Try “Stop and Chat” at home

You can use the “stop and chat” method when reading a picture book, watching a short English video, looking at a photo or playing with toys. Pause for a moment and ask a simple question, such as:

- What is it?
- What can you see?
- What colour is it?
- How many can you see?
- Is it big or small?
- Is he happy or sad?
- Who is this?
- Where is the dog?

If your child answers with one word, gently expand the answer.

Example 1 Child: Dog. Parent: Yes, it is a dog.	Example 2 Child: Happy. Parent: Yes, he is happy.
Example 3 Child: Blue. Parent: Yes, it is blue.	Example 4 Child: Two. Parent: Yes, two cats.

Parent tip

Ask only one or two questions at a time. Too many questions can make children feel pressured. Keep it short, light and fun.

3. Five-minute English activities

Regular short practice is often better than long practice. Try one simple activity at a time.

Activity 1: Colour hunt

Ask your child to find something red, blue, green or yellow.

Parent: Can you find something red?

Child: Red.

Parent: Yes, it is red.

You can also try:

- "Can you find something blue?"
- "Can you find something green?"
- "Can you find something yellow?"

For extra practice, help your child say:

- "It is red."
- "It is blue."
- "This is green."

Activity 2: Feelings check

Ask your child how they feel. This is a simple way to connect English with your child's real life.

Parent: How are you today?

Child: Happy.

Parent: I am happy today.

You can practise:

- "I am happy."
- "I am tired."
- "I am hungry."
- "I am sleepy."

Activity 3: Point and name

Use toys, clothes, classroom-style objects or pictures of animals. Give a simple instruction, then name the item together.

Try:

- "Point to the dog."
- "Touch the bag."
- "Show me something red."
- "Give me the ball."

Then ask:

- "What is it?"
- "What colour is it?"
- "Is it big or small?"

Possible answers:

- "A dog." / "It is a dog."
- "Red." / "It is red."
- "It is small."

Following the instruction is already useful practice, even before your child answers in words.

Activity 4: Toy talk

Choose one toy and ask simple questions.

Try:

- What is it?
- What colour is it?
- Is it big or small?
- Is this your toy?

Possible answers:

- "It is a car."
- "It is red."
- "It is big."
- "This is my toy."

If your child gives a short answer, model a fuller sentence.

Child: Car.

Parent: It is a car.

Activity 5: Story time chat

Read a short story or look at pictures together.

Pause and ask:

- What can you see?
- Who is this?
- What is it?
- What colour is it?
- Is she happy?
- Where is the cat?

Your child can answer with a word, a phrase or a sentence. All are useful steps.

4. Useful everyday questions

Try using these questions during normal family routines.

At breakfast • What do you want? • Do you want milk? • What is it? • What colour is it?	Getting ready • Where are your shoes? • What colour is your bag? • Is this your bag? • How are you today?
After school • How are you? • Who is this? • What colour is it? • Are you happy?	At bedtime • What can you see in the book? • Who is this? • What is it? • Is he happy or sad? • How many can you see?

Parent tip

It is fine if your child answers in one word at first. You can gently model fuller sentences.

Child: *Milk.*

Parent: *I want milk, please.*

5. Progress checklist

Tick what you notice this month:

☐	My child says English words without being asked.
☐	My child can name colours, animals, clothes or familiar objects in English.
☐	My child copies English phrases from class, songs or videos.
☐	My child answers simple questions in English.
☐	My child follows simple English instructions (for example, point, touch, stand up).
☐	My child moves from single words to short phrases.
☐	My child tries short sentences, even with mistakes.
☐	My child uses English during play.
☐	My child seems more confident about English.
☐	My child sometimes uses English at home naturally.

Remember

Mistakes are part of learning. Confidence comes before perfect accuracy. At this stage, a short, clear answer is a success.

6. Encouraging phrases for parents

Praise effort, not only correct answers.

Try saying:

- “Good try!”
- “I like your English!”
- “Great sentence!”
- “Let’s say it together.”
- “You remembered!”
- “Well done!”
- “Try again. You can do it.”
- “You are getting better!”

Positive encouragement helps children feel safe to try again.

7. What to avoid

To keep English practice positive, try not to:

- correct every mistake;
- ask too many questions at once;
- make English feel like a test;
- compare your child with other children;
- laugh at pronunciation mistakes;
- force your child to speak when they feel shy;
- practise for too long when your child is tired;
- expect full sentences before your child is ready.

Young children learn best when they feel relaxed, safe and encouraged.

8. A simple weekly home practice plan

You can try one short activity each day.

Day	Activity	Example
Monday	Colour hunt	<i>“Can you find something red?”</i>
Tuesday	Feelings check	<i>“How are you today?”</i>
Wednesday	Point and name	Point to the dog and ask, “What is it?”
Thursday	Toy talk	<i>“What is it? What colour is it?”</i>
Friday	Story time chat	<i>“What can you see?”</i>
Saturday	Song and action	Sing or move to an English song.
Sunday	Review and praise	<i>“What English did you learn this week?”</i>

Keep each activity short. Five minutes is enough.

9. A gentle reminder for parents

Helping your child use English at home does not need to be complicated. You do not need perfect English, and your child does not need perfect answers.

Small, happy moments are powerful.
A word can become a phrase.
A phrase can become a sentence.
A sentence can inspire confidence.

The goal is to help your child feel that English is something they can enjoy, understand and use.