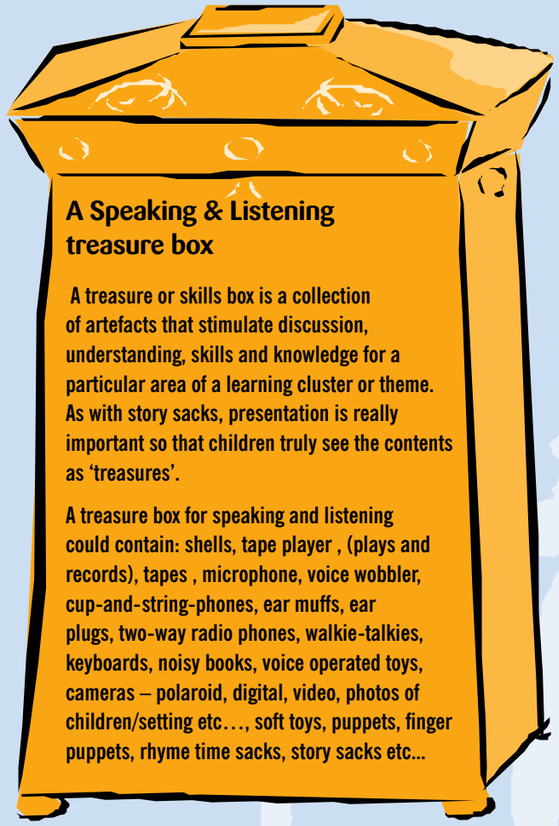
Speaking and Listening

Talking Den

This is a quiet place in your setting just to have a chat. A few cushions and treasures from a speaking and listening treasure box might help!



Video Show

Try video-recording the session and playing it back to the children. It's amazing how they respond and what they say. If you play it again with the volume turned down, the children can give a running commentary of themselves and their peers. It's a wonderful way to generate language for thinking.

Did you know...

The greatest indicator a potential reading ability is a child's vocabulary at the age of 3

> *"Reading and writing float on a sea of talk"*
> *(James Britton 11)"*

Talk Types

We wanted to ensure that in our role play areas children were actually developing their range of talk. We found sometimes, that whatever the role play area, similar scenarios occurred (often revolving around babies and fire fighters!). So we developed an 'audit' of talk types. We used this to monitor what was actually happening. Where we found gaps it helped us to know how to go into role play and model different types of talk. Our list included:

Others could be added, such as mother tongue, media phrases etc….

Above all it gave a real understanding about which type of talk was being used during role play. It was interesting to see where gender differences actually lay, and challenged us to develop children's talk, by planning experiences that would allow different types of talk to happen.

Leicestershire County Council

Role Play Ideas:

All role play scenarios should enhance the quality and range of speaking and listening. Here are some of our particular favourites. (Also see the sounds and music supplement which has more excellent ideas to support listening.

- T.V. studio
- Recording studio
- Snack bar (children's real snacks)
- Puppet show
- Telephone centre (phone in)
- News desk
- Weather desk
- Media based topic – e.g. 'Balamory'

Resource links:

"Speaking, listening, learning: Working with children in KS1 and KS2" DfES, Nov 2003, Ref; DfES0624-2003G (Some useful starting points, but aimed at National Curriculum)

National Literacy Trust
(support for developing children's literacy)

Basic Skills Agency (supports early literacy and numeracy, lots of ideas including working with parents)
www.basic-skills.co.uk tel: 020 7405 4017

Multicultural, RE & Curriculum Resource Centre,
Quorn Hall, Tel/fax: 01509-621579
email: BLofthouse@leics.gov.uk

> *"It's probably impossible for children to have too many opportunities for enjoyable talk with adults – but it is certainly possible, in today's noise filled, highly visual culture, for them to have too few."*
>
> *(Sue Palmer)* 11

On the Record!

Adding media to any role play makes a huge contribution e.g.: video camera, tape recorders, hand held recorders, digital cameras that record action.

Loud Hailers

The children love making loud hailers from a cone of paper. They love using them, and we love it when they use them outdoors!

Hat Box

A specially chosen hat from a box can really help children to be an important person with something to say.

Emotions Cube

We use an emotions cube in small group work. On each side of a large die there is a face displaying an emotion. This prompts talk about what the emotion might be, if the children have ever felt like that, and why the person on the cube might be feeling that way.

Shoe Box

To help children's listening skills we play a game with a range of footwear from the dressing up box. In a group, a child chooses a pair of shoes to wear. The others close their eyes and have to listen as the shoe-wearer gets closer. The listeners have to identify which shoes are being worn by the sound they make.

> *"Children need to listen to you talking about subjects they find interesting".*
>
> *(Sue Palmer)* 11

Talkie Walkie

When we go outside on a walk and stop to collect sticks, leaves or hunt for minibeasts, we find that children who normally don't play or talk to one another actually interact. Often this is carried on back indoors and the outside has given them something to really experience and talk about.

Makaton Action

We have a little boy with autism who uses Makaton, so we use it with all the children especially when singing songs. The parents loved it when we did a carol concert using Makaton as actions.

Echo Catcher

When you're outside take a tape player or something to record sound and go on an echo hunt. The children generally know where echoes can be found if they are familiar with their surroundings. However, it's still good fun to predict!

Walkie Talkie

The children love using these both inside and out (or even one inside and the other outside). Messages and discussions are held across the room from inside the role play area to the snack bar or anywhere really!

Small (Group) Talk

The children in a large group were not really responding as we wanted. The up-talkers dominated and the younger children were often at a much more basic level. So we have discussion times and stories in small groups. Now when we are together all the children are more confident and discussion is at a better level.

Show and Tell

Is your show and tell more like they show and you tell? Try smaller groups and 'talk partners' within those groups. Children sit knee to knee facing one another and show what they have. This might be simply handling something with an odd comment for younger children; but as they get older they can also respond to thought-out questions and eventually report back what has been discovered. Everyone is involved and it doesn't take forever!

Media Box

I had about 5 boys who would never open a book on their own. One day they found a book based on a TV character on the carpet. They came to show me and we sat for about 25 minutes. They 'read' the book to me and they talked and talked about the main character. A collection of media-driven books and associated toys and videos etc... is a fantastic way to hook some children into reading. With media boxes children become the 'experts' and they can tell you everything you need to know! I found it a really useful way to get boys talking.

Remember *Jack-a-nory*?

Have a story teller's chair, dress it up with some striking drapes and maybe a story cap to wear. It's amazing what stories you and the children can make up. Good story starters are:

- "Did I ever tell you about when I got lost?"
- "On my way here this morning, I met…"
- "Shall I tell you why I just love purple?"
- "If I close my eyes I can see a magic fairy!"