

Proud to support



15th July –
3rd September
2023

bigdogarttrail.co.uk

In support of
Julia's House
Children's Hospice

LET'S TALK *Swindogs*

Being able to communicate is one of the most important skills we ever learn. It helps us be a part of the world around us, to develop, to say how we feel and build relationships.

We also know that being outdoors is really important for children's speech and language development.

We've put together some of our favourite ideas to get Swindon talking on the Big Dog Art Trail.

Songs & Rhyme

Experts in child development have discovered that if a child knows eight nursery rhymes off by heart by the time they are 4 years old, they're usually among the best readers by the time they are 8!

Sing songs together on the trail:

- Where has my little dog gone?
- B-I-N-G-O
- How much is that doggy in the window?
- Hey Diddle, Diddle

You can change words in songs to make it more fun e.g. Where has my big dog gone?

Or perhaps use Michael Rosen's Bear hunt to make up your own rhyme

'We're going on a dog hunt, we're going to find a big one, we're not scared.... uh oh mud...!'

TOP ACTIVITIES

- Enjoy a picnic on the trail. Can you talk about what to pack and make it together?
- Collect treasures. Take a bag or bucket to collect treasures on the trail (or if you forget, pockets will do). When you get home display them and let your child talk about what they found or show some-one else.
- Take pictures- collect pictures and put together a memory book, talk about the adventures you had on the trail. Older kids could write things down too.
- Draw or model your own dog either at home or out and about, in the mud with a stick. Can you decorate it with interesting things e.g. leaves, flowers?
- Balloon dogs- a few spare balloons? make your own balloon dog.
- Cloud watching- lie down and watch the clouds, talk about the shapes and colours.





Walk and Talk

- **Follow your child's lead.** Slow down, get on their level, stop and talk about what they find interesting (This might be a big dog or it might be an ant climbing up it's leg).
- **Comment** on what your child sees, hears or does e.g. 'Wow big dog' 'A pretty flower'
- **Expand.** If your child says 'dog' you can add more information 'yes a big dog' or 'wow a colourful dog'
- **Repeat** say words over and over again
- **Take turns:** let your child have a turn, this could be talking, using pictures, gestures or noises. Accept all attempts to communicate as a 'turn'

Stories to Share

We know that reading to children has many benefits, one of which is promoting children's language. Here are some great 'Dog themed books' to get you talking.

- [Hairy MacLary](#)
- [The Detective Dog](#)
- [How to look for a lost dog](#)

Don't forget to visit your local library to find these and more.....

[Swindon Library Service](#)

Curious Questions

Remember to use lots of comments when talking with your child (think one question to every 5 comments).

We can ask questions at different levels, ranging from easier to harder, depending on the child's language level. This model is called the [Blank model](#). Examples of questions at different levels include:

- Level 1: What can you see / hear?
What is this?
- Level 2: What is happening?
You find where to go with a ...?
- Level 3: How are these dogs the same?
What is a sculpture?
- Level 4: Why is the dog trail a good idea?
How can we find the next dog?

If your child finds a question hard, try an easier one or just make a comment to give the child the information

Mindful Talk

Being in the moment can help our mental health and kids talking

When you find each dog, notice

5 things you can see

3 things you can hear

1 thing you can feel e.g. the grass under my feet

SWINDOGS VOCABULARY

Did you know a child starting school will have an average vocabulary of around 5000 words. This means between the ages of one and five, children will learn around 3.5 words per day. Children need to hear a variety of different words to build sentences:

NOUNS :

- Dog
- Artist
- Outside
- Sculpture
- Map
- Trail
- Weather
- Rain
- Sun

VERBS:

- Walking
- Looking
- Finding
- Searching

DESCRIBING WORDS:

- Enormous
- colourful
- new
- smooth
- cloudy
- sunny

FEELINGS:

- Excited
- Happy
- Amazed
- Nervous

Using signs helps children to understand and learn new vocabulary. In Swindon we use Signalong. You can find some signs to use in the trail [here](#)