

Do you Walkie Talkie?



Finding a sociable buggy has now become easier, thanks to the new Walkie Talkie label from Talk To Your Baby, the National Literacy Trust's early language campaign.

The Walkie Talkie label will highlight buggies with pusher-facing facilities, helping parents to choose buggies that promote communication with their toddlers. The label, which is available from Talk To Your Baby, has been designed to be used by manufacturers and retailers in-store, in catalogues and online.

Talk To Your Baby (TTYB) is campaigning for better access for parents to pusher-facing buggies. A TTYB survey in 2005 showed overwhelming support from parents and professionals for more affordable pusher-facing buggies, so that all carers can make the most of the communication opportunities of time spent with toddlers in buggies. The survey showed that many parents had struggled to find pusher-facing facilities when selecting a buggy.

Liz Attenborough, manager of Talk To Your Baby, says:

"Forward-facing buggies have been identified by early years professionals as one of the factors believed to be contributing to the poor communication skills of children entering nursery and school. We want affordable, sociable pusher-facing Walkie Talkie buggies to be available to parents so that they can chat and respond to their toddlers."

Adult communication with babies and young children helps them to develop good language and social skills. TTYB's buggy campaign has been widely supported by experts.

Kamini Gadhok, chief executive of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, comments:

"By facing a child when pushing them in a pram or buggy, parents and carers will increase eye contact and have more opportunities to stimulate talking at an important stage in the development of a child's language abilities."

James Law, professor of Language and Communication Science at Queen Margaret University College Edinburgh, says:

"There is nothing sadder than watching parents pushing buggies, perhaps wearing headphones, completely cut off from their child. The buggy which faces towards the parent provides the parent with all sorts of opportunities for interaction, making the trip all that more enjoyable for both parties."

Professor Charles Desforges of Exeter University agrees with the importance of Walkie Talkie time: "If we are persuaded of the importance of talk, and it is massive, then the forward facing buggy is unconscionable."

For more information about the Walkie Talkie campaign, visit

www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk

ends.

Notes for Editors

1. About the Walkie Talkie label

The National Literacy Trust's early language initiative, Talk To Your Baby (TTYB), has developed the Walkie Talkie label to make it easier for parents to identify prams, strollers and pushchairs that face the pusher.

A survey conducted on the TTYB website in 2005 revealed that:

- 88% of respondents said they would talk to their baby more if their buggy faced the pusher.
- Over 90% would choose a pusher-facing buggy over a forward-facing buggy if the cost were the same. 83% would like the facility to face both ways.
- The majority (74%) said that a pushchair facing both ways would need to be priced below £200.
- Over 90% of respondents said their children spend between half an hour and two hours in a pushchair or stroller each day.

The Walkie Talkie label is available to manufacturers and retailers by contacting Talk To Your Baby on 020 7820 6265 or emailing talktoyourbaby@literacytrust.org.uk.

2. About Talk To Your Baby

Talk To Your Baby is a campaign run by the National Literacy Trust to encourage parents and carers to talk more to children from birth to three. For more information visit www.talktoyourbaby.org.uk.

3. Talk To Your Baby - background

There is growing concern that increasing numbers of children are suffering from communication difficulties, and teachers and nursery workers feel young children's speaking and listening skills are on the decline. One of the contributing factors is believed to be the lack of time adults and young children spend talking together. 75% of heads of nurseries and schools admitting three-year-olds are concerned about a significant decline during the last five years in children's language competence at entry (National Literacy Trust/National Association of Head Teachers survey, 2001). 89% of nursery workers are worried that the occurrence of speech, language and communication difficulties amongst pre-school children is growing. The lack of adult and child time spent talking together was highlighted as the key reason by 92% of them (I CAN, 2004).

4. About the National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity dedicated to building a nation in which everyone enjoys the skills, self-esteem and pleasures that literacy can bring. It is the only organisation concerned with raising literacy standards for all age groups throughout the UK. www.literacytrust.org.uk.