Helping Your Child Improve English Oral Skills

A practical home guide for Primary 3–6

THE MAIN IDEA
Home practice should help your child think, explain, read and speak with less help over time. The aim is not a perfect script, but skills your child can use with new passages, pictures and questions.

1. Know your child's stage

The same home-support principles apply across Primary 3–6, but what we expect changes as your child progresses.

FOCUS	P3–P4 · BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS	P5–P6 · BUILD TOWARDS PSLE
Assessment	School oral formats and marks may vary. Build secure reading and speaking foundations.	School assessments may still vary. Preparation should increasingly reflect PSLE Oral demands.
Reading	Read clearly and accurately, use natural phrasing and keep a steady pace.	Read fluently and expressively, with a tone that suits the situation.
Speaking	Give a clear answer and, where appropriate, add a simple reason, detail or example.	Observe, work out what may be happening, share a view or experience, explain why and add useful detail.
Less help	Some support may still be needed; reduce it gradually.	Aim to answer and develop ideas with less prompting.

At PSLE, English Oral includes Reading Aloud and Stimulus-Based Conversation. Before PSLE, your child's school instructions and marking scheme remain the immediate assessment guide.

2. Your role at home

- Let your child do most of the talking. Avoid supplying the ideas.
- Give thinking time before stepping in.
- Work on one useful improvement at a time, then reduce the help.
- Follow the current oral target set by the tutor or school.

3. Use ASK → WAIT → PROMPT → TRY AGAIN

ASK	WAIT	PROMPT	TRY AGAIN
Ask one question that needs more than a yes/no answer.	Give a few quiet seconds to think. Do not answer for your child.	If needed, give one short prompt without giving the idea.	Ask for the whole answer again with less help.

Useful prompts: "Tell me more." · "What makes you think that?" · "Can you give an example?"

IF YOUR CHILD IS STILL STUCK
For this short home practice, start with one prompt that does not give the answer. If your child still needs a lot of help, stop that question rather than supplying ideas. Share the difficulty with the tutor or school.

4. Ask questions that make your child think and explain

Start with one main question. Add a follow-up only when it helps your child develop the idea.

MAIN QUESTION	IF MORE HELP IS NEEDED
"Tell me about an activity you enjoy."	"What do you enjoy about it?"
"What could pupils do to reduce waste in school?"	"How would that help?"

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5. Practise three useful ways of responding

These are practice moves, not fixed P3–P4 exam question types. At P5–P6, they support preparation for PSLE Stimulus-Based Conversation.

STAGE	1 · LOOK / PHOTO	2 · EXPERIENCE / PERSONAL	3 · THINK / OPINION
P3–P4 **FOUNDATION**	**LOOK** What is happening?	**EXPERIENCE** Tell me about a time you did something similar.	**THINK** Do you think this is a good idea? Why?
P5–P6 **TOWARDS PSLE**	**PHOTO** What do you notice? If needed: What does this suggest?	**PERSONAL** Tell me about an experience linked to this topic.	**OPINION** Do you think…? Why or why not?

PARENT TIP
Personal: help your child remember what happened; do not script a story. **Opinion: yes/no is only the starting point.** P3–P4: add a simple reason. P5–P6: explain why and add a relevant example or detail.

6. Practise Reading Aloud and Conversation differently

STAGE	READING ALOUD	CONVERSATION
P3–P4	Listen for clear and accurate words, natural phrasing, a steady pace and suitable expression.	Aim for a clear, relevant answer. Encourage a simple reason or useful detail when the question allows it. Give a short prompt only when needed.
P5–P6	Add fluency and expression. Encourage a tone that suits who is listening, why the text is being read and the situation.	Encourage your child to notice details, think beyond what is shown, share a personal response, explain ideas and answer with less prompting.

7. A simple 5–10 minute home routine

1. Choose one focus: Reading Aloud or Conversation.
2. Use one short passage, picture or question.
3. **Let your child try first. Wait, then give one short prompt if needed.**
4. Choose one useful improvement and ask your child to try the whole response or passage again.
5. On another day, use a different passage, picture or question to see whether the skill carries over.

8. Helpful habits for home practice

- Let your child finish before correcting; then choose one useful improvement.
- Keep the conversation natural. Avoid a long series of rapid-fire questions.
- Use examples to help your child understand the task, but do not give a full answer to memorise.
- If your child still needs a lot of help after a short prompt, move on and share the difficulty with the tutor or school.

9. Simple parent check — not a marking sheet

After practice, ask yourself:

- ☐ Did my child answer without me giving the idea?
- ☐ Did my child explain or add useful detail?
- ☐ Did my child try again with less help?
- ☐ On a later practice, could my child use the skill with a different passage, picture or question?

A FINAL REMINDER
Your child does not need a perfect answer at home. The goal is to help your child think, explain and respond with less help over time. Keep practice short, encourage genuine responses, and follow the current oral target set by the tutor or school.

Good luck with your oral practice!
Mr Mosman · Auryzen Academy

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