

How to Help Your Child Prepare 'Home News'



WHEN? Every day at school, we set aside a time for each student to tell about experiences that happen at home and other places outside of school. We call this sharing 'Home News'.

Your child may share 'Home News' during:

- Morning meeting
- Snack or lunchtime
- Recess, free time
- Writer's Workshop
- Other times of the day

WHAT? Anything of interest to your child and your family can become a topic of 'Home News'.

Your child may want to tell about:

Topic	Examples
Toys, Books, CDs, Clothes, Games	New build-a-bear, favorite song from a CD, special T-shirt
Experiences, activities, or family outings	Hair cut, birthday party, trip to the zoo, something they really didn't like (e.g., going to the dentist)
Interactions, memorable events, incidents, or special moments shared with family members and friends	Mom's lost wallet, visit from Uncle Mark,
Favorite and fun family games or routines	Hiding from Mom, playing "airplane" with Daddy
A demonstration or description of a procedure	How to do something, or how something was done (baked a cake with mom)
A story someone told them or something they heard on the radio or news program	Uncle Ron telling about his new puppy, local news story about a community fun run.

A recount of a TV episode or scene from a movie	Funny scene from Blue’s Clues, scary scene
Events coming up in the future	What is happening this weekend or next month, etc.
Events from the past	What happened after school the previous day, or further in the past.
Plans for the future	Planning for a birthday party or holiday event, planning for a visit from a relative or family friend.
Personal experiences related to current school curriculum	Transportation theme= student’s trip to the car wash. Solar System science unit= student’s uncle has a telescope

WHO? Your child shares with classmates and teachers.

HOW? Your child will share ‘Home News’ by releasing spoken messages that have been pre-recorded into a simple digitized sequencing device. This type of device supports the child’s ease of releasing pre-recorded spoken messages, in the same order as recorded. To share, the student may activate the surface of the device itself, or they may activate an appropriate switch plugged into the device.

Your child will share using a simple digitized, sequenced-message device, such as:

- A **LITTLE Step-by-Step™** device



- A **BIG Step-by-Step™** device



- An iPad, iPod Touch, iPhone device with an appropriate App. **Such as,**
 - o **GoTalk NOW**



Home News

- Pictello



- iTalker



- **A SuperTalker™ Progressive Communicator device**

- Using the 'step-ahead' jack for single switch sequential message playback



Prepare: Think and talk with your child about topics that they may want to share with friends at school. Offer your child a few different options for topics. Offer your child options for word choices (how to phrase the messages). Allow your child to choose to omit parts that they do not wish to share, even if you think otherwise. Consider: Was there an activity that he really loved? Something unexpected or silly? A new experience that he wasn't so crazy about? Any special events that you are talking about at home? Books he read? Fun games? Favorite songs? Also decide which aspects of your child's experience may be relevant to share, such as how they felt about something or their mood or temperament. Consider including sound effects and funny noises that are part of the topic. Brainstorm a list of the messages you will actually record for the 'Home News'.

Record: Record each sentence, or chunk of spoken language into one "Step" of the **Step-by-Step™ device**. Speak from your student's point of view, using personal pronouns from his perspective (I, we, my mom, etc.). In other words, say it in a way that your child would say it. Encourage your student to participate however they can, such as using a vocalization or spoken word to say hello or to fill something in. The general format is of a social conversational interaction, designed so that the student can release a message, then wait for responses and allow another person to take a turn, and so on.

Tips to help you Get Started

1. Say, "_____, let's record your news. What do you want to tell Miss Caitlin and your friends at school?"

- While your child listens, review interests, activities, events, experiences that you think your child would like to share. Pay attention to topics your child may be choosing using eye gaze, body language, and/or pictures.

- e.g, "You are looking at the cake! You could tell your friends about the birthday party!" You could tell about the book you read. You could share about watching a movie!"

2. Say, "Okay, here we go!" Press and hold the top of the **Step-by-Step™ device** as you say each part into it.
 1. Greeting: (for example, "Hi Miss Caitlin" "Hey everybody")
 2. Topic introduction: (e.g., "Guess what I did?")
 3. Messages: (Could be 2-10 messages, depending on the topic)
 3. Closing ("I guess that's about it." "I had a ____ day.")
 4. Question: (e.g., "Miss Caitlin, what are we going to do today?")

Practice Sharing: If you like, you can help your student practice or rehearse their 'Home News' before they share it again at school. A family member or friend should sit close to your child, ideally at eye level and within 3 feet. You may want to remind your child to release a message and then pause, look over towards their communication partner, and wait for a response from that person before taking their next turn. Respond to each spoken message shared by your child.

Troubleshooting: If the **Step-by-Step™ device** sounds scratchy, only records part of your home news message, or stops recording altogether, **change the battery**. It takes a 9Volt. This usually fixes the problem. Occasionally, or after being dropped, the speaker will become loose and the recording may sound really scratchy and soft. Return it to school for repair.