



What Can I Do at Home?

Suggestions for Supporting Speech and Language Development for Your Preschooler

- ★ **Respect** your child as an individual and communicator. Listen and respond to his or her comments, questions and ideas with sincerity. Be interested!
- ★ **Read, Read, Read!** Read with your child and talk about the stories. After reading a page ask basic *who, what, where, when, why* questions about what was just read. Use the pictures in the story as visual cues.
- ★ **Model** speech and language for your child (refer to “Ways to Model Language”). This provides your child with appropriate speech and language models throughout his or her day and across activities. Opportunities for students to use models are more effective than direct correction of your child’s speech and language productions.
- ★ **Talk about everything!** In the car: “I see two boys riding bikes,” at the store: “We need more milk for our cereal,” brushing your teeth: “First put the toothpaste on the toothbrush”...
- ★ **Point out** and develop **vocabulary** everywhere!
- ★ **Expect** a verbal response from your child if he or she is capable. Avoid questions that require “yes/no” responses. Prompt your child to tell you rather than just responding to gestures and body language. At first, respond to any language provided. Show your child his or her communication attempt was received. This helps him or her learn that communication is a valuable and meaningful two-way process which will help meet his or her needs for a lifetime.
- ★ **Provide** your child with as much peer contact as possible, especially with children whose language development is 6-12 months ahead of your child’s. This will provide him or her with language models that are slightly more sophisticated.



- ★ **Provide** your child with the word, phrase or sentence structure he or she may need to ask questions, make comments, respond, engage and cooperate with peers in play situations. When your child has difficulty thinking of or formulating a word provide **forced choices**. At first, make the choices silly, “For snack, will you choose apples or balloons?” then make them more realistic, “Do you want the blue car or the red car?”
- ★ **Read, Recite and Share** books, poems and songs that stress word play such as rhyme. This supports phonological awareness skills, important for reading development.
- ★ **Please do not** attempt to directly correct your child’s speech sounds until your child is able to produce and correct these phonemes easily. It is not helpful to point out every speech error, particularly those that are developmental in nature. Provide indirect stimulation, restatement and modeling for sound comparison. When the child’s maturation and auditory discrimination abilities have developed to the appropriate readiness level, he or she will make the sound comparison and begin to adjust toward accuracy.
- ★ **Note** how your child is attending, listening and following directions in addition to how he or she is expressing himself or herself. Hearing and focus are also important to speech and language development.
- ★ **Praise** your child’s communication attempts, particularly the successful ones! Provide genuine positive feedback for your child’s ideas, questions and verbal expression!
- ★ **Have fun** with language and successful communication interactions with your child!