



Speech-Language Pathology

www.connecticutchildrens.org

860.837.5915 phone 860.837.6379 fax

Kids are great! We just make'em better.®

A Parents' Guide To Helping Their Child Develop Speech And Language

Children develop speech and language by hearing and learning language within the natural environment (such as home or preschool). Here are ideas to use for children 1-3 years old.

1. Encourage your child to tell you what s/he wants. Do not guess what your child wants or needs.
 - Example: After your child wakes up from a nap, s/he always wants juice. Ask your child to gesture, point, lead, vocalize, or sign to tell you that he/she wants the juice.
 - Example: Place a favorite toy where your child can see but not touch it. Bring it down when your child points or vocalizes that s/he wants the toy.
2. Wait 15-20 seconds before giving a toy to your child when he/she gestures or points.
 - Pretend to not understand what the child wants.
 - Encourage your child to make a sound or word to help you understand what he/she wants.
 - After the 15-20 seconds, give your child the item
3. Use simple words when talking to your child.
 - If your child uses one word at a time, model 2 words put together. For example, your child says "baby" and you say "baby sleep".
4. Read colorful books with pictures. Talk about what you see in the pictures.
5. Talk about the things you are doing while you are doing them. Use simple words and short phrases to describe out loud what you are doing, how you are feeling or what you are seeing.
6. Talk about the things your child is doing or seeing. For example, your child is playing with a ball on the floor and you say "roll ball, bounce ball" as your child rolls and bounces the ball.
7. Praise your child for using words or sounds to communicate.
8. Repeat new words often so your child can learn them more quickly
9. Sit at eye level and play turn taking games with your child
 - Peek a boo
 - Patty cake
 - Building blocks
 - Rolling a ball or car
10. Toy ideas for your child. Toys should be bigger than the hole in the toilet paper roll to prevent choking.
 - For children 1-2 years old: Push and pull toys, pop up toys, simple puzzles, balls, push n' go toys, see and say, peek a boo, bubbles, blocks, bath toys, small slides, bowling set
 - For children 2- 3 years old: Duplo Blocks (Large Legos or some other similar brand), Mr./Mrs. Potato Head, Little people, tea set, play kitchen, cars/trucks, garages, trains, farm animals, and play dough