

HELP YOUR CHILD TO LEARN MORE LANGUAGE

1 LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD

Let your child know that what s(he) has to say is important to you. You can do this by looking at the child, answering questions, making comments directly related to the child's talking and showing your interest. Take time to find out what's on your child's mind.

2 TALK WITH YOUR CHILD

Provide the "raw materials" s(he) needs to learn language vocabulary, new words, ideas and grammar (how to put sentences together). S(he) needs to hear language to produce it. A child cannot learn by watching TV. S(he) needs you.

3 SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY AND USE SHORT, SIMPLE SENTENCES ON YOUR CHILD'S LEVEL

4 REPEAT UNTIL YOU'RE SURE YOU HAVE BEEN UNDERSTOOD

5 EXPLAIN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Explain what is happening and why. Use clear statements:

- why you're going to the doctor
- why they cannot play with mommy's sewing box
- what is going to happen next
- where they are staying while mommy is at work, etc.

6 DESCRIBE WHAT IS GOING ON RIGHT NOW IN YOUR CONVERSATION WITH YOUR CHILD

In order for words to have meaning, the child has to see, feel and experience what you're talking about. Talk about what s(he) is doing right now. Try to create language learning experiences for your child (e.g., pointing out new vegetables in the supermarket and their color, size, texture, etc.).

7 "MIRROR" AND "EXPAND" THE CHILD'S SPEECH ATTEMPTS

When your child says something, you should immediately say what s(he) said back to him/her ("mirroring"). (Example of this technique: Child: "Me ride car." Parent: "Yes, Aaron, you are riding in the car.") Never "correct" the child or say that s(he) is not saying it right.

8 MAKE SPEECH FUN, SO S(HE) WILL WANT TO LEARN MORE

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9 KEEP AN OPEN MIND

10. ENCOURAGE NEW IDEAS

- a Ask your child questions about new activities and experiences
- b Show him/her how things work
- c Point out similarities and differences
- d Help him/her label new things, actions, feelings, experiences
- e Point out parts of things and how they fit together
- f Point out how one thing relates to something else they already know about

11. ENCOURAGE LISTENING

Listen to music and noises around your home.

12. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO VERBALIZE FOR HIMSELF/HERSELF

- to ask questions
- to tell feelings, fears, problems
- to talk about daily incidents
- to share his/her own interests (all require active listening on the parent's part)

Set aside a time with the child each day to talk about his/her concerns and what happened that day.

13. READ TO YOUR CHILD

Read to your child as much as possible and look at pictures in magazines. Turn off the TV. Try to do this every day.

14. INCLUDE LANGUAGE LEARNING IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES

Don't set aside a special time for this, as you will for reading stories and hearing about school. Make it a part of every activity you share with your child - getting him/her dressed, going shopping, waiting for the bus, etc.

15. ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Plan for daily outdoor and physical activity to help the child learn about the world and him/herself.

- run, jump, throw, catch, sand and water play, climbing, touching, exploring, taking walks and trips
- provide some quieter small muscle activity: cutting, pasting, drawing, coloring, puzzles, building

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