

Speech Therapy Parent Resources

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DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?



Children learn to say more and more different speech sounds as they get older. This chart shows the age at which most children say each sound and sound combination correctly, along with a few examples. The most important thing to find out is whether your child can be understood by someone who doesn't know him/her.

3

p b m w h n

"mommy" "papa" "hi" "no" "beep-beep" "wow"



*By age 3, others should understand me **most** of the time, even though I make errors.*

4

k g d t

"kite" "go" "doggy" "toy"

5

f y ch sh j s tw qu gl bl ng

"yes" "push" "face" "sing" "glue" "blue" "quick" "chin"



*By age 5, others should understand me **all** of the time, even though I make some errors on more difficult sounds.*

6

l r v ng pl kl kr fl tr st dr
br fr gr sn sk sq sp str spl

"play" "ring" "green" "stop" "cracker" "street" "yellow"

8

th z zh sm sl shr skw spr skr

"thumb" "there" "with" "slip" "scream" "squeeze" "treasure"



*By age 8, I should say **all** of the speech sounds correctly.*



SIMPLE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE SKILLS

1. Use more open-ended questions

Open-ended questions

(require a longer answer)

What do you think?

What did you do at the park?

I wonder what she will do now...

Closed-ended questions

(require just a yes/no answer)

Did you like it?

Did you play on the swings?

Do you think she will kick the ball?

2. Correct and improve by example

If your child makes an error, don't tell them they are wrong. This can make communication feel scary. Just respond enthusiastically and show them how it's done. Praise them when they speak, even if it's not perfect.

Child: Mommy goed to work.

Parent: You're right! Mommy went to work today.

3. Think aloud

Even when you're busy, you can expose your child to more language by talking about what you're doing as you do it. Take your child to the grocery store and talk about each food item as you put it in the cart. Talk about the colors, sizes, and uses of clothing as you put laundry away.

4. Read together

Make reading stories together into a daily habit. You can also ask them questions about the pictures and the story. Make this a fun experience by reading books they love, using interesting voices, and talking about the important events and characters in the story.

5. Speak clearly and slowly

Use a slightly slower pace and pronounce your words clearly when talking to your child. This gives them a little extra help with processing your words.

6. Follow your child's lead

Both children and adults have more reason to talk when it's about something they really care about. Pay attention to your child's interests and talk about the things they like most. Join in and make a quiet game into an opportunity for talking and interacting.

Parent: (sees child playing silently with toy truck)

Parent: "Wow! That car drives fast! Where is it going?"

7. Set up obstacles and opportunities

Try to set up the environment to encourage your child to use words to get things they need or comment on something interesting. You want to show them how useful language can be.

-Put their favorite snack just out of reach so that they have to ask for help to get it.

-Set up a silly scenario, such as hiding a funny toy under their blanket right before they get into bed.

8. Sing songs

Music is a fun and motivating way to improve language. Nursery rhymes and other simple childrens' songs are repetitive and reinforce concepts such as rhyming and rhythm. Adding gestures and movements can help give more meaning to the words. Plus, singing along with a song can be a much less intimidating way to practice language skills.

9. Wait expectantly

Sometimes the best approach is just to give your child the time and space to talk. Well-timed silence can be just as useful as a good question or comment. Try pausing throughout a game or conversation and looking at your child expectantly, just as you would with an adult when you are waiting for a response.



Language Expansions

Language expansions are a great way to help your child talk more. A language expansion is just a way of showing your child how to make what they say longer, more complex, and more specific.

All you have to remember is to **add a little bit more** onto what your child says.

In the examples below, you will notice how the parent does not point out errors to the child. (This can make communication feel threatening.) Instead, the parent just uses correct words in their own response. Being a good example for your child helps them to learn language naturally in a positive environment.

Add Length

Child: Juice.

Parent: You want juice!

(The parent made the child's statement just a little bit longer by changing 1 word into a short, simple sentence.)

Add Complexity

Child: Girl eating. She hungry.

Parent: The girl is eating because she is hungry.

(The parent turned 2 simple sentences into 1 complex sentence by adding the word "because".)

Add Meaning

Child: The dog go away.

Parent: Oh no! The dog ran away!

(The parent substituted a more specific word ("ran" instead of "go") to teach the child more vocabulary.)



TIPS FOR READING TOGETHER

Reading to your kids helps them learn to think, talk, and listen.

BEFORE READING

YOU PICK! Let your child choose a book to read. They will pay attention and learn more easily if you are reading a book they like.

TAKE A GUESS Look at the picture on the front cover and point to the title as you say it. See if your child can use this information to guess what the book will be about.

WHILE READING

GET INTO IT!

Laugh along! Use facial expressions and funny voices to make the story exciting and memorable.

ASK AND DESCRIBE

Ask your child questions about the story and pictures. Talk about what you hear and see. Think about questions that start with who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Oh look! The bird is in the tree!

Where is the cat hiding?

What is the bear doing? Why is the girl sad?

What do you think will happen next?

PAUSE

Make sure you're not the only one doing the talking! Sometimes it's best to wait and give your child a chance to talk on their own. After you ask a question or finish reading an exciting part of the story, pause and look at your child expectantly.

ADD A LITTLE EXTRA

When your child answers with short words or sentences, add just a little extra onto what they say. You are giving them a good example of how to use more words.

Parent: What is the boy doing?

Child: Swim.

Parent: The boy is swimming!

Child: (points to apple)

Parent: What is that?

Child: Apple.

Parent: A red apple!

FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S LEAD

If your child is uninterested or frustrated, don't force it. You want reading to be a fun experience. Focus on the pictures or parts of the story your child likes. Watch and listen to your child and help them say what they're thinking.

Child: (pointing) Bird!

Parent: Wow! A pretty bird!

Child: He flying!

Parent: He is flying! Up...up...up into the tree.

Child: (points to a cat in the tree)

Parent: Uh oh! What do you see?

Child: Cat in tree.

Parent: A cat is in the tree! Oh no! What's going to happen?

AFTER READING

REVIEW Talk about what you just read. Look at the pictures to help your child remember the story.

YOUR TURN! Now let your child tell the story. They don't have to be able to read the words -- they can look at the pictures and tell you what happened. Ask them questions along the way if they get stuck.

READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Can your child...



Follow 2 part directions?

For example: Go to your room and get your shoes
Get a pencil and sit at your desk
Stand up and clap your hands

Answer simple questions?

For example: Where did you go today?
What did you eat for breakfast?

Understand how books work?

For example: Turns pages
Follows words left to right
Knows the cover and the back of the book

Engage in pretend play?

For example: Pretending to feed a doll
Acting out a story / roleplay

Understand simple conversations and school lessons?

Retell short stories?

Talk about their day?

Use words to ask for things they want or need?

Talk in sentences and use many different words?

Interact with other children?

Pay attention to an activity for at least 5 minutes?

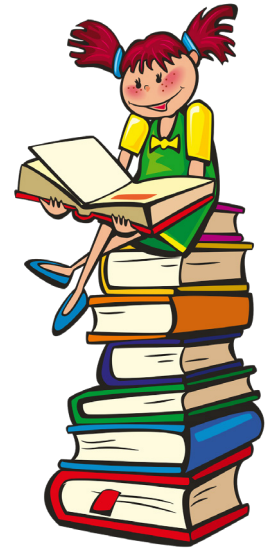
Write their name?

Speak clearly (you can understand most of what they say)?

Listen to others when they talk?

Count from 1-10?

Name basic shapes and colors?



READY FOR 1ST GRADE?

Can your child...



Follow directions with multiple parts?

For example:

Get a pencil, sit in your chair, and write your name

Answer who, what, when, where, why, how questions?

For example:

Why did the cat climb the tree?

Read some words correctly and try to sound out words they don't know?

Have conversations with others?

Describe people, places, and objects?

(What they look like, what they do, etc.)

Understand and remember lessons taught in class?

Take turns when talking and playing with others?

Talk in full sentences and use many different words?

Talk in sentences and use many different words?

Do simple addition and subtraction?

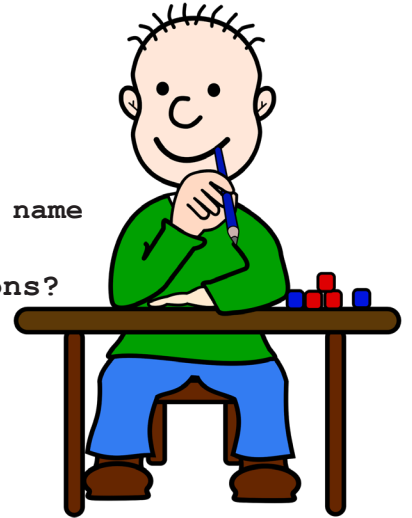
Understand rhyming words?

Speak clearly (you can understand what they say)?

Use correct grammar most of the time?

Identify and write the letters of the alphabet?

Talk about the setting, characters, and events of a story?





Talking at the Grocery Store

A trip to the grocery store is a great time to add more language into your daily schedule. Remember to make this a fun experience to help your child make a positive connection with language. It's okay if they get things wrong. You can show them a good example. If your child is not interested, try again another time or just choose one of these ideas instead of all three.

1. Make a list

Let your child help you decide which foods and items your household needs from the grocery store. If they run out of ideas, ask questions like, "What do we need to make a sandwich?" or "What goes with peanut butter?" Then ask your child to guess the first letter of each word or let them write the list themselves.

 This helps your child practice vocabulary words, writing, reading, and phonics skills.


2. Grocery Store Detective!

Go to each aisle in the grocery store and name items for your child to find. If this is too easy, use more details to describe the specific item you want. For example, "Find the big milk carton with a brown cow on the front" instead of "Find the milk."

 This helps your child practice understanding spoken instructions, adjectives, and vocabulary.

3. Where does it go?

When you get home, take turns pulling an item out of the bag and telling the other person where to put it. For example, "Yum! Here is some cheese. Cheese goes in the refrigerator." If this is too easy, you can make it harder: "Here is some cheese. Cheese goes in the refrigerator on the top shelf behind the milk."

 This helps your child practice language skills such as using and understanding words that describe a location.



Tips: Creating opportunities for your child to use language at home. Many of these ideas can easily fit into even the busiest of schedules. When in doubt, follow your child's lead. Join them in whatever they are playing and talk about it as you go along.



FAMILY PHOTOS

Look at family photos together. Talk about the people in the photos and what they are doing.



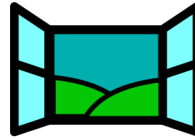
READ A BOOK TOGETHER

Let your child pick out a book. Read the book with your child and ask questions about the story and the pictures. If they like the story, help them act out their favorite part.



GETTING READY

While getting dressed for school or getting ready for bed, ask your child to tell you what clothes he/she wants to wear or what needs to be done next.



LOOK OUT THE WINDOW

Play "I Spy" as you look out the window together. (Take turns describing something you see to the other person while they try to guess what it is.)



PRETEND PLAY

Help your child dress up or use toys to pretend to be a firefighter, a teacher, a hairdresser, or anything they can imagine. Play along and encourage them to act out things the character might do and say.



EXPLORE

Go to a new place in your community and talk about what you see and what you want to do. You could even just take a walk or take a drive. Tell other family members to ask your child about what happened on the adventure.



CRAFTS

Let your child draw or cut out magazine photos. Help your child tell stories about the pictures or sort them into categories (food, people, animals, etc.)



MYSTERY BOX

Put some random objects from around the house into a box. Your child can choose an object, describe it to you, and you have to guess what it is without looking. Then switch roles.



PLAY A BOARD GAME

Most board games involve a lot of communication: setting up the game, asking for pieces, talking outloud about what to do next, etc.



CHORES

Make daily chores into a game. Give your child instructions such as "Find all the socks in the laundry basket" or "Go get the soap and put it next to the sink." See if you can race to complete each task. Let your child give you instructions, too.



MEALTIME

Let your child help you prepare a meal. You can ask them what they want to eat, tell them what to get from the refrigerator, or let them tell you how to set the table.



SHOPPING LIST

Let your child help you make a grocery list or shopping list. Ask them what you already have and what you need. Make up questions for the items you know you need. (For example, "What do we use to wash our hair?")



Talking at Mealtime



Mealtime is a great time to add more language into your daily schedule. Remember to make this a fun experience to help your child make a positive connection with language. It's okay if they get things wrong. You can show them a good example. If your child is not interested, try again another time or just choose one of these ideas instead of all five.

1. What is this?

Go to the kitchen with your child and see if they can name different foods and/or kitchen tools. Take turns choosing an item that the other has to name.

 This helps your child practice vocabulary words related to cooking and eating.

2. What should we eat?

Talk about what you should have for dinner. Give your child 2 or 3 choices. (Otherwise you might end up eating candy every night!)

 This gives your child confidence and motivation because they are part of the decision-making process.

3. What do we need?

Talk about what ingredients you might need to make this meal. See if your child can guess what goes into it or what tools you will need. If they get stuck, you can ask questions or give them clues.

 This helps your child practice vocabulary and problem-solving.

4. Kitchen Detective!

Ask your child to find ingredients and/or tools for you. Make it into a game (how many can they find, how fast can they find them, etc). You can also play this game to set the table. You can make it easy or hard depending on your child's age and level.

Easy: Where is the potato?

Harder: Please find a potato and put it on the table.

Hardest: Please find 3 potatoes and 2 onions. Put them on the table next to the large bowl.

 This helps your child practice understanding spoken instructions and vocabulary words.

5. Step by Step

As you make the meal, talk about what you are doing. Let your child help you cook if there are parts they can do safely. When the meal is finished, see if your child can remember the steps. Help them out with questions or clues.

 This helps your child practice memory and spoken language skills.




Talking in the Morning



Mornings can be hectic, but with just a few extra minutes they can also be a great time to add more language into your child's day. Remember to make this a fun experience to help your child make a positive connection with language. It's okay if they get things wrong. You can show them a good example. If your child is not interested, try again another time or just choose one of these ideas instead of all three.


1. Sing a song

Mornings can be hard for everybody. Sing nursery rhymes or simple songs with your child to help them start their day. This can be a fun routine to look forward to.

 Singing reinforces the rhythms and sounds of language. Adding in gestures or movements can also give more meaning to the words.

2. What should I wear?

Talk to your child about what they would like to wear that day. (You can limit the choices if you think they'll get too wild!) This is a good opportunity to talk about colors, sizes, and types of clothing. Make it funny! If it's hot outside, see what they say when you get out a winter coat. Or hand them two different shoes to encourage them to ask for the correct pair.

 This helps your child practice language skills such as describing with adjectives, requesting, and using clothing vocabulary.

3. What are we doing today?

Talk to your child about plans for the day. Here are some ideas for comments or questions:

“What do you think will be the best part of the day?”

“What do you think you will learn in school today?”

“I am going to work today. I will be very busy doing ____”

“What are you going to play at recess today?”

 This helps prepare your child for their day and provides some extra language practice for topics that are relevant to their life.