

A Parent's Guide to Supporting Communication

Language Learning within Routines:

Bath Time: Bath time is a great place to help children achieve their language goals. Many children, even those who are often distracted, will focus well during this nightly routine activity. Additionally, this activity provides busy parents a way to work towards their child's language goals without having to dedicate any extra time!

Activity Suggestions for YOU:

1. Identifying Body Parts:

- a) Take turns washing body parts with soap/wash cloth- 'Mommy is washing your nose, now you wash mommy's nose' etc. (hands, feet, nose, head, hair, ears, chin)
- b) Have pieces of a Mr. Potato head sink to the bottom of the tub and have children search for the pieces 'find his eyes'.

2. Imitating Actions/Expressions:

- a) Be animated and silly during bath time by having your child imitate actions such as clapping, patting their hands on the water, bouncing up and down, making silly faces, driving a boat on the water, doing a washing motion, tapping on the tub like a drum.

3. Imitating Sounds/Words:

- a) Play peek-a-boo with a wash cloth- 'boo!'
- b) Sing Songs--" row row row your boat"-while modeling actions in the water
- c) Use Verbal Routines: 1 2 3 'go' and make a toy dive under the water. Or have a child lift their hands up high while you say 'up up up' and 'down'/'splash' as they bring their hands down to hit the water
- d) Model action words while you play and bathe your child- 'wash wash wash' as you wash child's hair, 'splash' as your hands hit the water, 'dive' as a toy goes under the water. Place a toy your child likes on the sink in view and model the word 'get' for them to imitate and then grab the item and give it to your child as a reinforcement.

4. Following Directions:

- a) Have child identify familiar bath time objects: get the "boat", "duck"- then have them make it splash or go under water as a reward.
- b) Give them simple commands: 'get the toy boat', 'get the towel', 'splash the water'

5. Joint/Functional/Pretend Play:

- a) Have your child pretend to give a favorite toy character a bath while they are bathing
- b) Pretend you are fishing or drive a boat
- c) Practice pouring water from one container to another
- d) Have a car wash with some cars/trucks

6. Model Model Model!

- a) Model words around whatever you are doing
- b) Use simple language: 'drive boat, 'pour water', 'splash' etc..
- c) Be Animated: When modeling be loud and silly

Modeling Suggestions for YOU (not exhaustive list):

1. Gestures/Actions:

- a) Raising hands up and down to splash, Clapping, making toy jump, swimming,

2. Sounds:

- a) Splashing sound, whoa, wee, uh oh, oh no, wow, yay

3. Word List:

- a) Verbs: splash, go, pop, get, hide, clean, scrub, pour, dive, clean, help
- b) Nouns: Bubble, pop, water, splash, color words, soap, towel, toy names, body parts
- c) Position Words: up, down, under, on, over, out, in
- d) Descriptive Words: wet, dry, cold, hot, warm

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Car Rides: Car rides happen frequently in our day to day life and so they are a great place to help children achieve their language goals. In the car, your child is in a seated position and cannot escape. This makes it a great opportunity to work on language without having to chase them around.

Activity Suggestions for YOU:

1. Naming/Identifying:

- a) Take turns naming objects/things you see out the window. Turn it into an I-spy game
- b) If you child has few sounds/words- simply model the words for them- 'I see a tree'

2. Imitating Sounds/Words:

- a) Sing Songs
- b) Model the actions of the car- when you come to a 'Stop' say 'Stop', daddy is 'Driving the car'
- c) As you pass by objects/things ask what sound they make- car goes 'beep', cow says 'moo'.

3. Ask Questions:

- a) Ask your child questions about things around them
- b) Play a yes/no game about the things around you
- c) Ask your child about their day and/or where you are going and what you are going to do

4. Colors/Shapes:

- a) Have your child find things that look like a particular shape
- b) Model and/or ask your child what color the cars or objects being passed are
- c) At a stop light ask them what color the light is

5. Work on Speech Sounds (articulation errors):

- a) Have your child practice saying the names of objects you pass that use the sounds/words being targeted in speech

6. Model Model Model!

- a) Model words around whatever you are doing
- b) Use simple language:
- c) Be Animated: When modeling be loud and silly

Modeling Suggestions for YOU (not exhaustive list):

1. Sounds:

- a) vroom, whoa, yay, uh oh, animal sounds, honk honk, beep beep, click (buckle seatbelt), whoosh (close door)

3. Word List:

- a) drive, go, fast, stop, out, close, open, buckle, see, hear, look, the names of various objects/nouns for things you pass, yes, no

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Outside Play: When outside or at the park are great opportunities to incorporate language learning. Many young kids enjoy movement based activities and so using these times to teach them language will often help them respond better because it is interesting and motivating to them.

Activity Suggestions for YOU:

1. Model Actions:

- a) Have the child imitate your actions- running, walking, skipping, jumping, spinning
- b) Create a 'follow the leader' game whereby you model 'marching, kicking legs, raising hands etc..'

2. Following Directions:

- a) Play direction games like Simon says or red light green light
- b) Create a scavenger hunt- Have your child retrieve objects in the environment to find 'bug, rock, ball, grass'
- c) Use tools and build something together while giving simple directions along the way

3. Imitating Sounds/Words:

- a) Choose to model words around the activities your child is engaging in. If they are climbing up a play set- say 'go up up up' or 'climb up' or if tossing a ball you might model 'throw, get, kick, toss, my turn'. If swinging you might model 'more, push, higher, help, on, stop, go'
- b) Use Verbal Routines (not sure what this is-check out my resource specifically on verbal routines): on the top of the slide hold your child and say '1 2 3 go', spin them around and say 'go go go and....stop'
- c) Use bubbles: Model words like 'pop, up, more, get, bubble, my turn'
- d) Use swing set to model words like 'help, push, high, up, down, more, swing, stop, go)- hold the child when mid air and say 'down' while letting the child go back down etc...

4. Joint/Functional/Pretend Play:

- a) Pretend you are going on a 'mission/'adventure'- make up a story and act it out
- b) Give piggy back rides, pretend to be animals
- c) Have your child help you build/create something outside
- d) Take dress up activities outside to get your child more interested- join them during this

Modeling Suggestions for YOU (not exhaustive list):

1. Gestures/Actions:

- a) spinning, jumping, kicking, climbing, running, throwing, sliding, swinging

2. Sounds:

- a) whoa, wow, wee, uh oh, oh no, uh huh, animal sounds, yay

3. Word List:

- a) go, out, in, on, under, around, over, get, help, me, my turn, higher, swing, slide, run, jump, kick, fall, find, look, see, names of objects around outside,