



2025

# Talk Time with Your Child



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LANGUAGE STRATEGIES FOR BUSY PARENTS:  
QUICKLY GET YOUR CHILD *TALKING MORE*

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Your words shape your child's words. Let's fill it with learning and love today.

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Whenever you spot a QR code within these pages, go ahead and scan it - it'll take you straight to a video explanation!



## My Top Picks for Language Development

As a speech-language pathologist, I often get asked, "Eli, which toys and books do you recommend for children to enhance their language skills?"

While it's true that almost any toy or book can be a gateway to learning and language development, there are certain ones that I find exceptionally effective and engaging. These are the tools I personally use and recommend in my practice:

- **Books:** I look for stories that encourage interaction, have repetitive phrases, and are rich in visuals and context to spark curiosity and conversation.
- **Toys:** I prefer toys that promote creative play, social interaction, and offer opportunities for children to express themselves and learn new words.

On the next page, you'll find my list of top books and toys that have proven to be invaluable in supporting the language development journey of countless children.

Each item is linked (affiliate links included) for your convenience, so you can easily add these powerful tools to your child's collection.



# CLICKABLE LINKS - TOYS & BOOKS



## My Top Toys

### Matching Eggs



### Water Table



### No-Spill Bubbles



### Race Track



### Farm Set



### Pop the Pig



### Clamp Bee



### Jigsaw Puzzle



### Dinososaurs

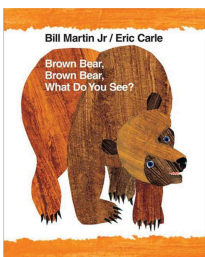


### Toy Food Set

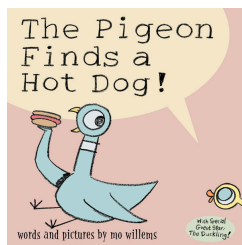


## My Top Books

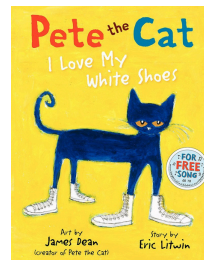
### Brown Bear



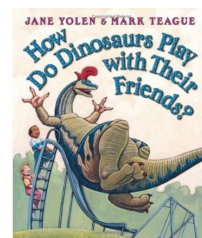
### Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog



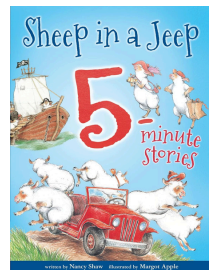
### Pete the Cat



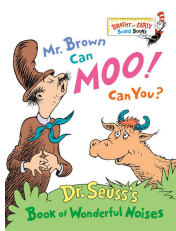
### How Do Dinos Play with Their Friends



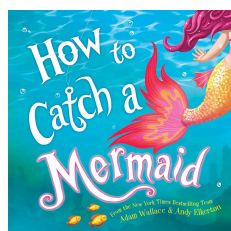
### Sheep in a Jeep



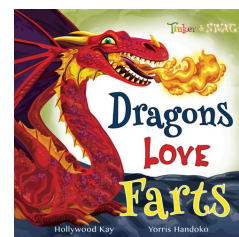
### Mr. Brown Can Moo



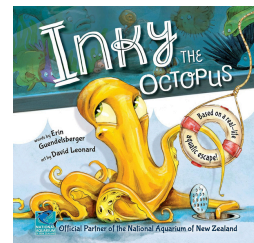
### How to Catch a Mermaid



### Press Here Dragons Love Farts



### Inky the Octopus





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## This book took me:

### 01 EDUCATION

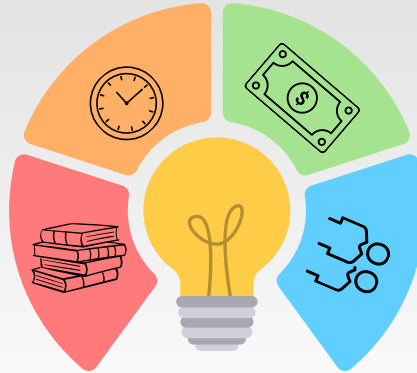


Master's Degree in Communication Disorders and Sciences.

### 02 TIME



10,000+ Hours Helping Kids Talk



### 03 MONEY



Spending thousands of dollars consuming hundreds of speech therapy materials.

### 04 EFFORT



Collaborating with professionals in the field of speech-language pathology and child development.

### 05 RESEARCH



Reading hundreds of evidence-based research articles.

## DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

- Receiving skepticism from friends and family members about pursuing an evaluation for your child's speech-language skills.
- Desire to easily understand and navigate your child's unique language development journey.
- Feeling unsure if what you're currently doing is sufficient in helping your child learn language.

These strategies are the foundation of what I teach in my comprehensive courses. For those seeking hands-on practice and step-by-step video examples, my Talk Time Courses are designed to help you see real results fast.





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## What This Book Is

Hello, caring parent!

Navigating the world of your child's language development can sometimes feel like wandering through an unfamiliar landscape. You've picked up my book because you've been looking for a roadmap. And this book is here to be just that - your trusty guide to help you on this extraordinary journey.

This isn't a conventional parenting book that offers one-size-fits-all advice. Instead, it's a treasure chest filled with science-backed strategies and hands-on techniques aimed at equipping you to enhance your child's language skills from infancy through to their preschool years. Think of it as your toolbox, and the beauty of a toolbox is its flexibility - you don't need to use all the tools at once, but they're there whenever you need them.

## Why I Wrote This Book

I've worked with countless parents who've felt the same way as you do now. Anxious. Overwhelmed. Even a bit scared. I've seen the look of worry in their eyes when their child doesn't hit a language milestone "on time." I've felt their desperation for reliable, actionable advice.

That's where this book comes in. I wrote this guide to address those very concerns. To replace your worry with knowledge, your confusion with a clear plan, and your fear with confidence. I want to provide a resource that goes beyond the usual parenting advice and give you an active role in shaping your child's language development. I've poured in years of experience and research, countless input from parents, and most importantly, lessons learned from the children themselves.

Every chapter in this book is designed to equip you with the tools and understanding you need to turn everyday interactions into powerful language-learning opportunities. Because that's what you're here for, right? To support your child's language development journey in the most loving, playful, and effective way possible.





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## How This Book is Organized

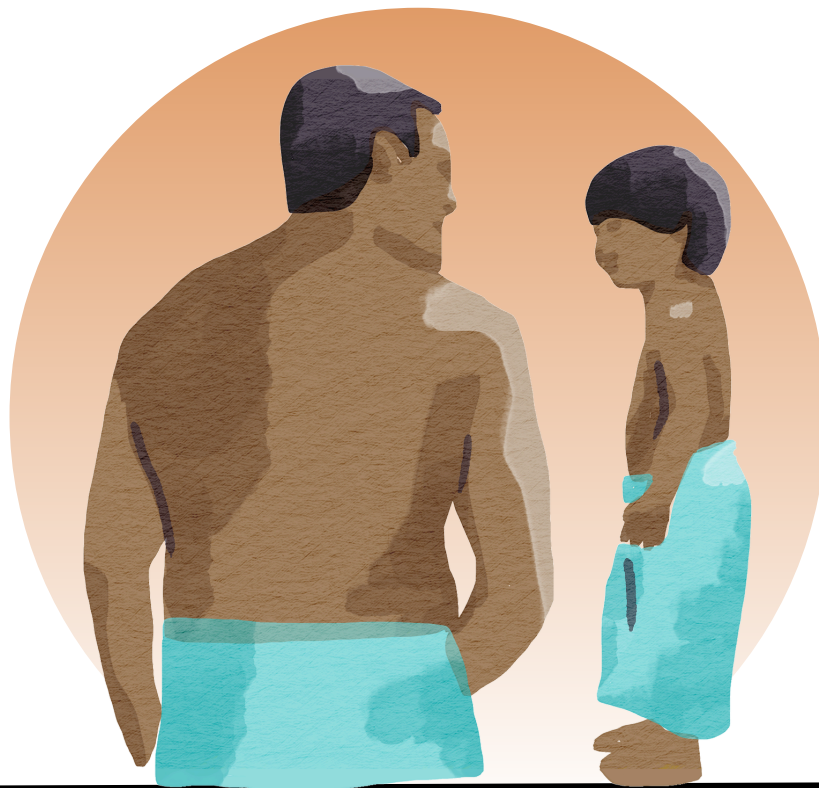
Your journey with this book begins with a comprehensive overview of speech & language milestones. These tables serve as roadmaps to your child's language development, helping you understand where they are and where they're heading. They provide a baseline, a foundation from which you can navigate the language strategies that follow.

As you delve deeper, you'll find a vast array of language strategies, carefully arranged in the order I of how I use them as a child grows.

Each strategy offers relevant tools and techniques you can immediately apply in your interactions with your child. You can choose to work through the strategies sequentially, or you can jump to those most relevant to your current needs - just like pulling out the right tool from your toolbox.

By the time you reach the end, you'll have a deeper understanding of your child's language journey and a practical, applicable set of strategies to support them every step of the way.

Let's get started on this journey together!



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## DISCLAIMER

*The information in this guide is intended to be used along side therapist evaluation and advice. It does not serve as a replacement. If you are a parent concerned about your child's speech and language development, please pursue an evaluation with a certified speech-language therapist.*





**I'm a busy parent. How much extra time each day will I need to implement these strategies?**  
The strategies in the e-book are designed to be incorporated into your everyday interactions and routines with your child. It's not about finding extra time; it's about using the time you already have more effectively.

You can help your child's language skills soar.

## HOW BIG OF AN IMPACT DO I MAKE ON MY CHILD'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AS A PARENT?

- Research highlights the powerful role of parental involvement and support in language development. Pungello et al. (2009) found that children with more involved parents exhibited significantly greater language development than those with less involved parents.
- The benefits of a rich language environment have been substantiated in various studies. Suskind et al. (2016) showed that children exposed to such environments experienced notable increases in vocabulary growth compared to those in less language-rich environments.
- Parental responsiveness is another key factor in boosting language development. A study by Demir-Lira et al. (2018) found that children with responsive parents demonstrated marked improvements in their language development compared to children with less responsive parents.
- Lastly, clear and accurate language modeling by parents is shown to greatly enhance a child's pronunciation skills. Ramírez-Esparza et al. (2017) showed that children with such exposure had significantly better pronunciation accuracy than those without it.



## THE GOAL: IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE SKILLS

## COMMON SPEECH-LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY:

**Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):** A professional who assesses, diagnoses, and treats speech and language disorders in children and adults.

**Language Delay:** This is when a child's language skills are developing slower than usual. They might be behind in speaking or understanding words compared to kids their age.

**Language Disorder:** This is a more long-term condition where a child has ongoing trouble understanding or using words. They might struggle to make sense in conversations or to follow instructions.

**Articulation:** The way we use our mouth, tongue, and teeth to make sounds.

**Phonological Processes:** These are the patterns young children use to simplify adult speech. All children do this as they learn to talk.

**Phonemes:** The individual sounds in words. For example, the word "bat" has three phonemes: /b/, /a/, /t/.

**Semantics:** The meaning of words and sentences.

**Syntax:** The rules of sentence structure in a language.

**Morphology:** The structure of words and how they are formed. For example, adding "-ed" to "walk" to make "walked".

**Pragmatics:** The social use of language.

**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC):** All forms of communication, other than oral speech, that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. This can include signs, gestures, or communication devices.

## EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Your child's ability to express wants and needs through both verbal and nonverbal communication.

## RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Your child's ability to understand and make sense of the words and sentences they hear.



## AGE

## RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

## EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

**0-3  
MONTHS**

- Quiet/smiles in response to sounds
- Startles to loud sounds

- Cries for basic daily needs
- Coos and smiles

**4-6  
MONTHS**

- Responds to changes in voice tone
- Eye contact towards sounds

- Laughs/makes sound for emotions
- Babbling and cooing

**7-12  
MONTHS**

- Recognizes own name called
- Comprehends simple words/phrases
- Looks at objects/people when named

- Points to objects/shows them to others
- Simple gestures to communicate
- First words ~ 12 months

**1-2  
YEARS**

- Follows 1-step directions
- Understands simple questions
- Points to named objects/pictures

- Puts 2 words together
- Says social words (hello)
- Asks simple WH- questions like "What?" and "Where?"

**2-3  
YEARS**

- Follows 2-step directions
- Understands simple opposite (big/little)
- Understands most simple sentences

- Puts up to 3 words together
- Asks "Why?"
- Simple prepositions (in, on)

**3-4  
YEARS**

- Simple concepts - colors, shapes
- Responds to name from another room
- Understands most simple questions

- Puts up to 4 words together
- Asks "When?" and "How?"
- Simple pronouns (I, me) and plurals (-s)

**4-5  
YEARS**

- Understands order words (first, last)

- Tells short stories/keeps conversation
- Code switches based on listener/place



## PERLOCUTIONARY PERIOD

During this stage, babies don't yet understand the communicative intent behind their behaviors. For example, an infant might cry because they're hungry or uncomfortable, and their parents respond by feeding or comforting them; the baby isn't intentionally thinking, "I'm going to cry now to get fed."

AGE	COMMUNICATION
<b>0-2 months</b> Reflexive Vocalizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic responses of the body</li> <li>• Burping, crying, sneezing, coughing</li> </ul>
<b>2-4 months</b> Cooing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sounds made in back of mouth</li> <li>• Back vowels and/or back consonants</li> </ul>
<b>4-6 months</b> Vocal Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raspberries, growls, squeaks</li> <li>• Begin to hear consonant-vowel syllables</li> </ul>
<b>6+ months</b> Babbling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduplicated babbling — CVCV syllable chains (/dada/)</li> <li>• Variegated babbling — CV chains with variations in Cs &amp; Vs (/bade/)</li> </ul>

## ILLOCUTIONARY PERIOD

During this stage, babies begin using intentional, but non-word communications like gestures, vocalizations, and expressions to convey their needs and wants. For instance, a baby might point to a toy they want, make a specific sound when they see a favorite pet, or shake their head to indicate 'no.'

<b>9+ months</b> Speech Patterns Emerge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child produces long strings of variegated babbling (e.g. /peebaamaaaniiii/)</li> <li>• Babbling is accompanied by sentence-like intonation patterns</li> </ul>
--	---



How can I respond to babbling?



## AGE

## NUMBER OF WORDS



**12 MONTHS**

**FIRST WORDS**



**18 MONTHS**

**50**



**24 MONTHS**

**200-300**



**3 YEARS**

**1,000**



**5 YEARS**

**2,200-2,500**



**12 YEARS**

**50,000**



## AGE

## AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS PER EXPRESSION



**12-26 MONTHS**

**1.0-2.0**



**27-30 MONTHS**

**2.0-2.5**



**31-34 MONTHS**

**2.5-3.0**



**35-40 MONTHS**

**3-3.75**



**41-46 MONTHS**

**3.75-4.5**



**47+ MONTHS**

**4.5+**



## HERE'S THE AVERAGE AGE WHEN CHILDREN LEARN THE ENGLISH CONSONANTS AROUND THE WORLD










2 YEARS	3 YEARS	4 YEARS	5 YEARS	6 YEARS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B • N • T • NG</li> <li>• D • F • K • H</li> <li>• G • Y • M • W</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• V • L • J</li> <li>• Z • S</li> <li>• CH • SH</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TH (VOICED)</li> <li>• ZH</li> <li>• R</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TH (VOICELESS)</li> </ul>

This information is based on a review that analyzed 15 studies of 7,369 children speaking English in Australia, Republic of Ireland, Malaysia, South Africa, United Kingdom, and United States (McLeod & Crowe, 2018).



"**Speech Simplification Processes**" is a fun way to describe the clever shortcuts your child uses when they're just starting to talk. These tricks help them get the hang of using their lips, teeth, and tongue to say words. No need to worry though - most kiddos naturally outgrow these by age three or four, making it an adorable part of their talking journey!



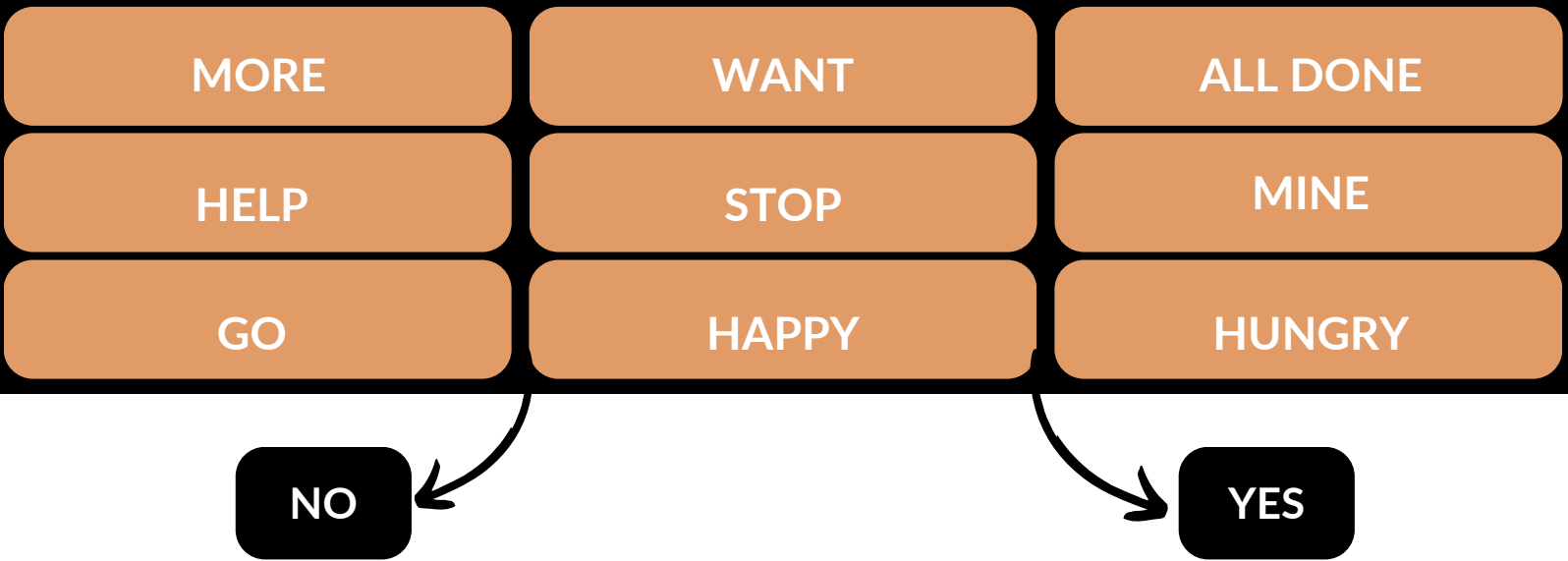
<p><b>Final Consonant Deletion</b></p>	<p>Deletion of the last sound in a word. <b>dog -&gt; do</b></p>	
<p><b>Cluster Reduction</b></p>	<p>Deletion of one sound from a consonant cluster (two or more consonants together). <b>star -&gt; tar</b></p>	
<p><b>Syllable Reduction</b></p>	<p>Deletion of the weak syllable. <b>banana -&gt; nana</b></p>	
<p><b>Gliding</b></p>	<p>Liquid sounds (L, R) are changed to glides (W, Y). <b>lion -&gt; wion</b></p>	
<p><b>Vocalization</b></p>	<p>When the ER or L sounds are replaced by a vowel <b>car -&gt; cah</b></p>	
<p><b>Fronting</b></p>	<p>Back sounds (K, G, NG) are made in the front (T, D). <b>goat -&gt; doat</b></p>	
<p><b>Deaffrication</b></p>	<p>Affricate sounds (like CH, J) are replaced by a fricative (like SH, S). <b>cheese -&gt; zeese</b></p>	
<p><b>Stopping</b></p>	<p>Fricative sounds (like S, F) or affricates (like CH, J) are replaced by a stop (like B, T). <b>see -&gt; dee</b></p>	
<p><b>Prevocalic Voicing</b></p>	<p>Voiceless consonants at the beginning of words are replaced by voiced consonants. <b>pie -&gt; bye</b></p>	
<p><b>Postvocalic Devoicing</b></p>	<p>Voiced consonants at the end of words are replaced by voiceless consonants. <b>bag -&gt; bak</b></p>	



Simply put, this strategy is all about identifying words that are important and functional in daily life - things, actions, or feelings. This way, your little one can learn how to ask for things they need, express how they feel, or share what they're doing making it easier for them to communicate and connect with us.

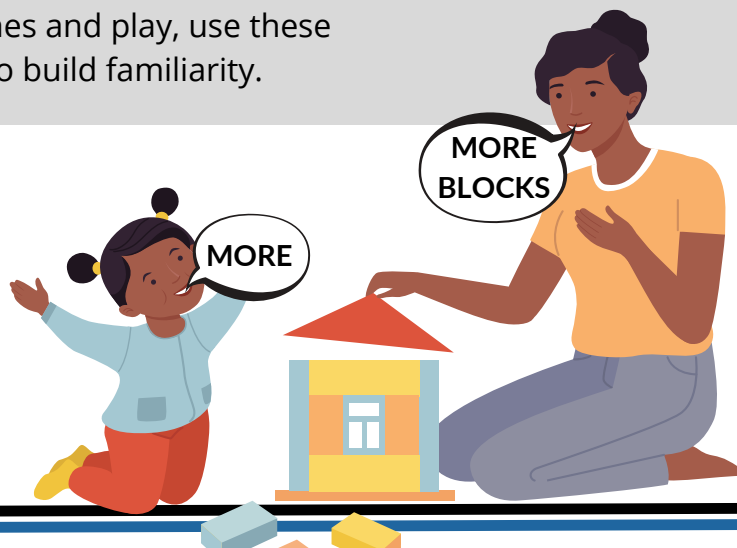
Studies like the one by Beuker et al. (2013), have emphasized the importance of teaching functional language first to children. They found that children whose parents focused on functional language showed increased language proficiency over time.

Is your child communicating their basic wants and needs?



1. Start with teaching functional words.
2. These are practical words and phrases for everyday use, helping kids express what they want, need, or feel.
3. Pick functional words (refer to table above) that your child can use in different situations - at the park, meal times, bedtime.
4. During daily routines and play, use these functional words to build familiarity.

1. Say the names of items during daily routines and playtime.
2. Hand your child a toy or object and tell them its name instead of asking 'what's that?'.
3. For example, say "ball" when playing catch, "food" during meals, or "truck" when handling a toy truck.





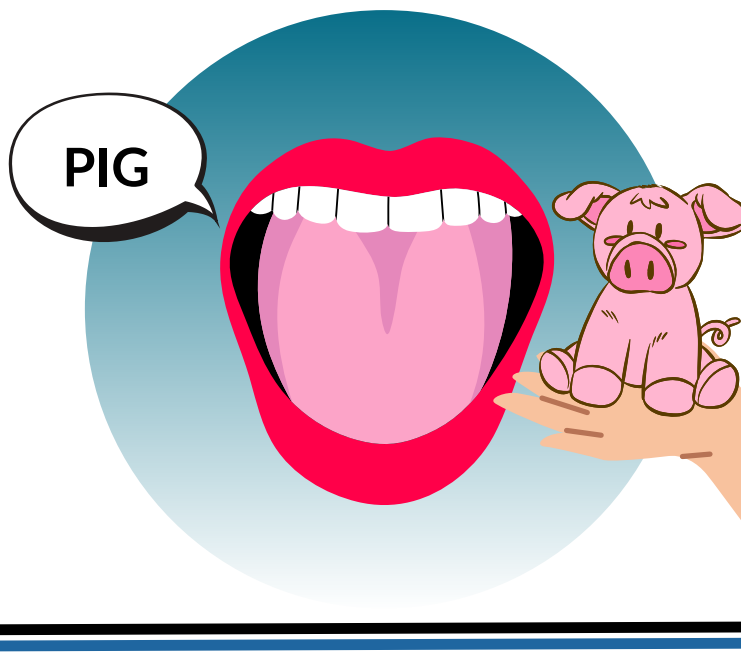
It's as straightforward as it sounds - when you talk about a toy or object, hold it close to your mouth. Doing this helps your little one focus both on the object and your words. It's a neat trick to help them connect sounds with objects and boost their listening skills.

Researchers Yeung and Werker (2013) have highlighted how synchronizing the visual presentation of an object near the speaker's mouth with spoken words can facilitate better language understanding and acquisition in infants. They suggested this strategy significantly aids in associating objects with their respective verbal labels.



## TO USE THIS STRATEGY, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Select a high interest toy or object that your child will love.
2. Bring the item close to your face, speaking clearly and with enthusiasm. For example, if you're holding a toy pig, say "pig" with raised intonation.
3. Keep eye contact and use facial expressions to engage your child, strengthening the link between the object and the words. Remember, they learn by watching and copying you.
4. Ask open-ended questions or give your child a chance to talk about the object, encouraging communication (e.g. "What are you holding?").
5. Always praise your child's efforts, boosting their confidence and making language learning a fun activity.



Using sign language involves teaching your kiddo some simple gestures that stand for words. Don't worry if they start signing before speaking - it's all part of the process! Just remember, whenever you use a sign, say the word at the same time. It's a wonderful way to help them grasp language, both spoken and signed.

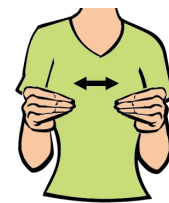
Researchers Rowe and Goldin-Meadow (2009) have examined the role of gestures in early language development. They found that children whose parents frequently used gestures, in addition to verbal language, exhibited enhanced language skills and vocabulary growth.



HELP



ALL DONE

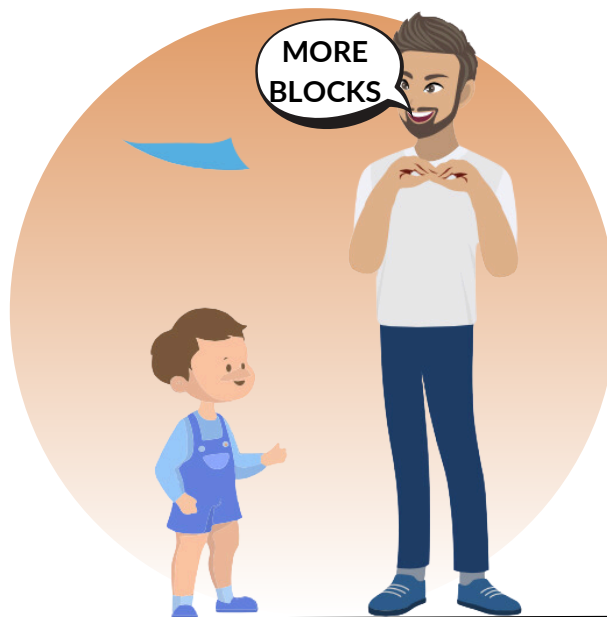


MORE



## TO USE SIGN LANGUAGE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Pick practical, age-suitable words that match your child's interests for them to learn via signing
2. Show these signs while speaking, giving both clear visual and auditory signals.
3. Encourage your child to mimic and use the signs in their communication.
4. Consistently use the signs during conversations to strengthen the link between the gesture and its meaning.
5. Applaud your child when they use signs, bolstering their confidence and eagerness to communicate further.



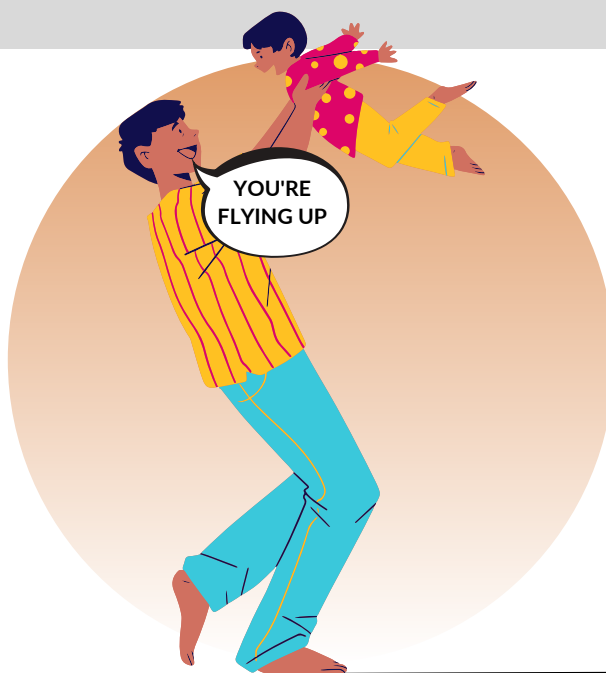
Think of it as grown-up language, just spruced up a bit to help your baby understand it better. It involves talking in a higher pitch, with exaggerated sounds, and slowing down your speech. And no, it's not 'baby talk.' It's a fun and effective way to teach your little one about language.

A study by Kuhl, Tsao, and Liu (2003) found that the exaggerated vowel sounds and clear speech patterns characteristic of parentese significantly improved infants' phonetic discrimination abilities, paving the way for better language development.



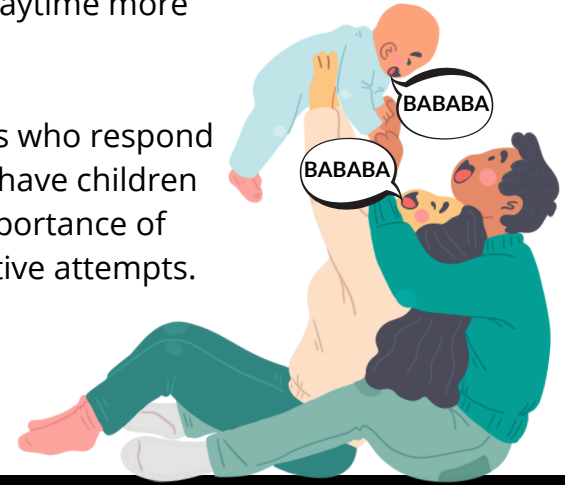
## TO USE PARENTESE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Use parentese during routine activities: during daily routines, like meals or bath time. For example, "Feeling hungry? Let's enjoy some tasty food!" with a raised pitch and slow, clear words.
2. Engage with your child. Remember, parentese is about more than just speech. It involves making eye contact, expressing a range of emotions, and reacting to your child's sounds and words.
3. Follow your child's interests. Use parentese to respond to your child's interests and actions. If they're focusing on a ball, say, "Wow, you found a round, bouncy ball!"
4. Encourage interaction. Celebrate your child's communication attempts and provide positive feedback. This can be through words, smiles, or cuddles.
5. Maintain consistency. Regularly incorporate parentese into your interactions with your child. It's not about achieving perfection but about consistently offering engaging and rich language input for your child.



It's as easy as it sounds - you just copy what your little one does! If they make a sound, you make it back. If they perform an action, you follow their lead. This not only helps them learn language, it also makes playtime more interactive and fun!

In Tamis-LeMonda et al.'s (2001) study, it showed that mothers who respond more frequently to their infants' babbles, gestures, or actions have children who achieve language milestones faster. This indicates the importance of parents imitating or echoing their children's early communicative attempts.



### TO USE IMITATION, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Watch your child during play or daily activities to spot their sounds, actions, or ways they play.
2. Copy your child's sound, word, or action in a fun, natural way. If they say "Baa" with a toy sheep, you can reply, "Baa, that's right, the sheep says baa!"
3. React to your child's actions or sounds like you're having a chat, letting them lead the way.
4. Step-by-step, add onto your child's sounds or actions, introducing new words or gestures to help grow their language skills.
5. Celebrate and encourage your child's involvement and efforts, increasing their confidence and love for language-based activities.



It's like giving a play-by-play of your own actions. For example, if you're making breakfast, you might say, 'Now, Mom's cracking the egg.' This helps your little one connect the words with what they're seeing, boosting their language learning.

Rowe, M. L. (2008) found that the quality of child-directed speech, including strategies like self-talk, was associated with improved child vocabulary skills. Parents who frequently narrated their actions or spoke directly to their children had kids with larger vocabularies.



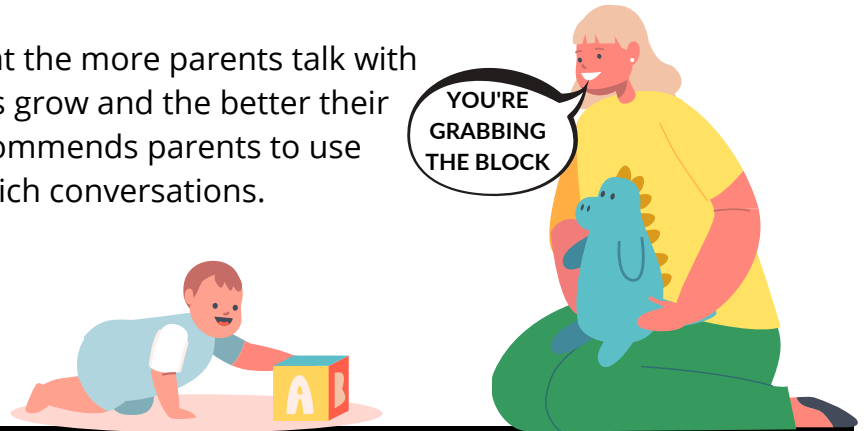
## TO USE SELF-TALK, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Participate in daily activities with your child like preparing meals, dressing up, or tidying up.
2. Describe what you're doing in simple, clear words, keeping your tone normal and steady. For instance, while making a meal, you might say, "I'm cutting the vegetables" or "Now I'm stirring the soup."
3. Use words that are relevant and fit your child's age.
4. Repeat key words or sentences to help your child link the words with the actions they describe.
5. Encourage your child to take part in the activity, boosting their understanding of the language and concepts shared.



We've all watched sports games with commentators narrating every move. That's 'Commenting' in action. But instead of sports, you'll be narrating your little one's world. Whether they're stacking blocks or splashing in the bath, describe what they're doing with rich and varied language. This helps expand their vocabulary and makes them feel seen and heard.

Zimmerman et al.'s (2009) study found that the more parents talk with their children, the faster their vocabularies grow and the better their future academic outcomes. The study recommends parents to use strategies like "commenting" to promote rich conversations.



## TO USE COMMENTING, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Watch your child as they play or go about their daily routines, taking note of their actions and interests.
2. Describe what they're doing using simple, child-friendly language. Share about what they're touching, eating, or playing with.
3. Paint a picture with your words, using different vocabulary and sentences to express what your child is doing.
4. Pause now and then, giving your child time to think and chat back. But remember, it's okay if they don't respond or mimic you.
5. Cheer on your child's attempts to communicate, this helps boost their confidence and makes them eager to take part in more language activities.



Think of it as a little break in your conversation. This strategy is all about giving your child some extra time to process what you've said and come up with a response. Just like when we need a moment to think, kids do too! So, after asking a question or making a statement, pause for a few seconds to let your little one absorb and respond. Patience is key!

According to research by De Temple and Snow (2003), parents who utilized a three-second wait time after asking a question during book reading with their two-year-old children had children who produced 25% more spoken responses, compared to parents who did not utilize wait time.



## TO USE PAUSING, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Have a chat or do an activity with your child using simple language that fits their age.
2. Pause on purpose during your talk or activity. This gives your child time to think and respond. Show them you're waiting for their answer by looking at them.
3. Wait up to 10-15 seconds, or until it feels awkward, then wait 5 more seconds.
4. If needed, give gentle hints without rushing them or finishing their thoughts.
5. Praise them when they try to communicate. This boosts their confidence.
6. If they don't respond after two rounds of waiting, suggest an appropriate answer.



This strategy involves placing items your child wants just out of reach but still visible. This playfully 'tempting' situation encourages them to express their desire for the object. It could be anything they love - a toy, a snack, or even your attention. The trick is to pick something that really grabs your kiddo's interest.

Girolametto et al.'s (2004) study found that when parents create situations where children are motivated to communicate (like withholding a favorite toy or snack), it can prompt the use of language. The strategy resulted in increased communicative attempts by children.

### SOME POSSIBLE ENGAGING ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Bubbles
- Wind-up toys
- Snacks in containers
- Toys placed in plastic jars
- Box of toys with a lid on it
- Items on a shelf
- Holding items in your hand
- Much more...

Pick one! You can modify your environment to create more opportunities for communication.

### TO USE COMMUNICATIVE TEMPTATIONS, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Put the items your child wants somewhere they can see, but not reach.
2. Draw their attention to these exciting items.
3. Wait quietly for 5-10 seconds to see if they try to communicate.
4. Give them one or two items at a time. This keeps their interest and creates more opportunities to communicate.
5. Model functional language like "more," "want," etc. Or, if they already use these words, build on what they say. For instance, if they say "more," you say "want more."
6. Watch how your child responds and adjust how long you interact.
7. Don't make them say a word to get the item - it could frustrate them. Instead, wait 5-10 seconds, then say the word you are targeting.
8. Repeat the process.





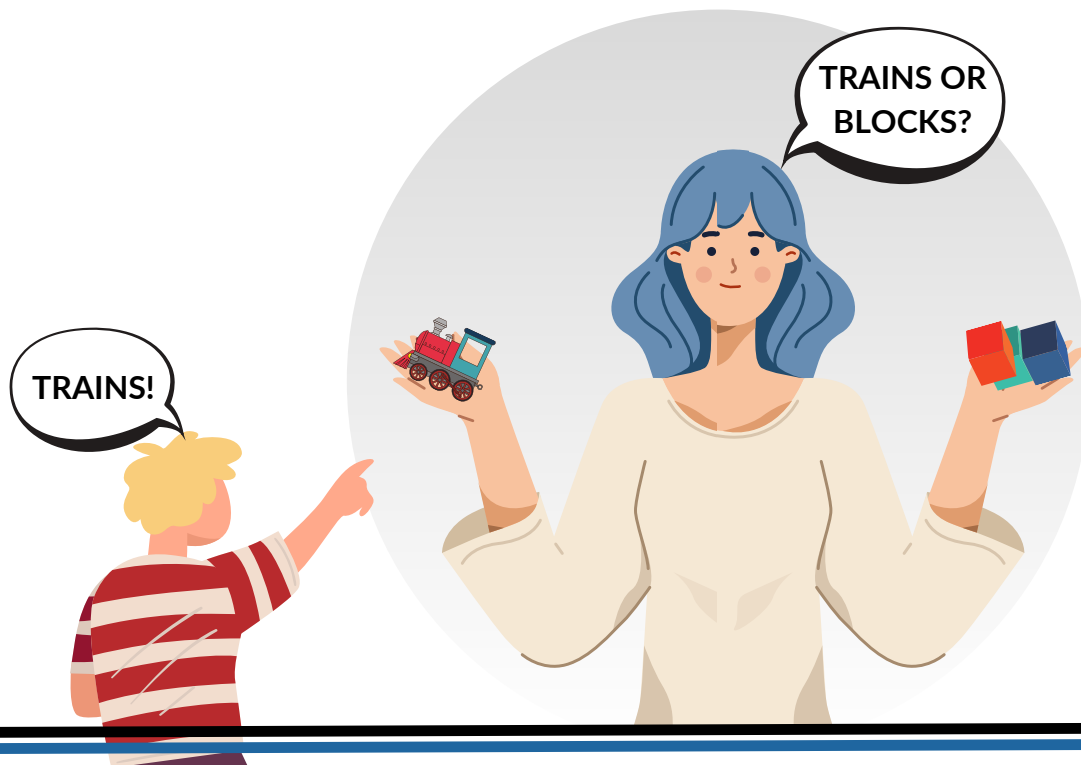
Choices are all about empowering your kiddo with decision-making. Instead of asking yes/no questions, give them two acceptable options to choose from. For example, "Do you want the blue cup or the red cup?" This way, they get to use more words and feel a sense of control. Yes, they're making a choice, but it's from the options you've already deemed alright. Smart, right?

A study by Romski et al. (2015) found that parents offering children choices and waiting for their response facilitated greater language engagement. The act of making choices encourages children to use words to express their preferences.



## TO USE CHOICES, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Give your child two options related to what they like or need.
2. If possible, show them the options while you say what they are. This gives them both a visual and verbal clue.
3. Real communication doesn't always need words. They can choose by looking, pointing, using sounds, or gestures.
4. Say out loud what they chose. This helps them connect the word to its meaning.
5. Always reward their attempts. This creates positive experiences with communication.



Here's how expansion works: when your child says something, you repeat it back but add an extra word to it. So, if they say 'car,' you might say 'red car.' It's a simple yet effective way to introduce new vocabulary and make their language more complex. Remember, it's not about correcting them, it's about building on what they're already saying and understanding.

A study by Huttenlocher et al. (2002) found that expansions were significantly related to the complexity of children's language at 2 and 3 years of age. By expanding on their children's utterances, parents can help increase the complexity of their language skills.



## TO USE THE EXPANSIONS, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Pay close attention to what your child says.
2. Add 1-2 words onto what your child says by adding relevant words, grammar, or context while maintaining the original meaning.
3. Say the expanded phrase, using clear and age-appropriate language.
4. Don't force your child repeat the phrase you added detail to.
5. If they do repeat your expanded phrase, go to step two.

This strategy pairs well with strategies such as choices and pausing.



This strategy is all about going with the flow and letting your little one guide the interaction. Watch their interests, follow their actions, and use these moments as opportunities for natural language learning. It's all about making communication a fun, engaging, and personal experience for your child. This isn't just effective during playtime, it's something you can integrate into daily routines and activities too. Remember, when they lead, they're more engaged and eager to communicate!

A study by Hanen and Manolson (1995) highlights the importance of following the child's lead during interactions. According to their findings, children are more likely to participate actively and learn from an interaction if they are allowed to take the lead.



### TO USE LET YOUR CHILD LEAD, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Notice what your child enjoys doing or playing with.
2. Join in their favorite activities, adjusting your communication to match their interest.
3. Use strategies that inspire them to share their thoughts and feelings.
4. Mimic their actions, words, or sounds to build their social and language skills.
5. Pause and give them time to respond, respecting their communication speed.
6. Praise their efforts, boosting their confidence and motivation.



Repetition is as simple as it sounds - you keep saying the same words, phrases, or patterns of language to your child. It's like giving them more chances to hit the bullseye - the more they hear a word, the better they understand and remember it.

Repetition is a fantastic way to strengthen their language skills, so don't be shy about sounding like a broken record. Use this strategy throughout the day - during play, while performing routine tasks, anything really. The key is to link words to actions or objects consistently.

A study by Suskind et al. (2016) found that repetition of words within a variety of contexts facilitated a child's ability to learn new vocabulary. This points to the importance of incorporating repetition into daily routines and playtime.



## TO USE REPETITION, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Select suitable, everyday words, phrases, or patterns based on your child's interests and needs.
2. Say these words when you're interacting with your child, using straightforward, consistent language.
3. Use the chosen language parts repeatedly in different settings to aid familiarity and comprehension.
4. Urge your child to practice and incorporate the repeated language in their communication.
5. Applaud your child when they use this language, increasing their confidence and motivation to communicate.



We adults love our questions, don't we? But when it comes to helping our little ones learn language, questions can sometimes add more pressure than help. Instead of firing off questions to gauge what your child knows, try using comments, choices, or descriptions. These methods will help your child understand what's happening around them and expose them to new words. So, the next time you feel tempted to ask a question, pause, and see if you can turn it into a statement or offer a choice instead!

A study by Chouinard (2007) found that children engaged in more productive language interactions when adults commented on their activities rather than asking them questions. By commenting, adults provide more language input for children, offering them opportunities to learn new words and concepts.



## TO USE REDUCING QUESTIONS, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

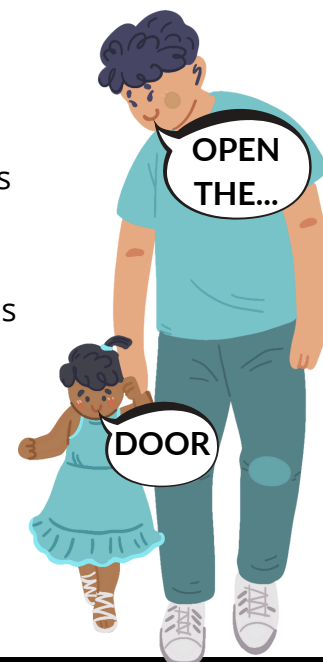
1. Pay attention to your language when chatting with your child, aiming to ask fewer questions.
2. Use comments or descriptions to talk about actions, things, or feelings around your child, giving them rich language examples.
3. Encourage your child to chat or start conversations with open-ended prompts and pauses, giving them time to process and express.
4. Cheer on your child's efforts to communicate, building confidence and motivation.
5. Slowly start asking questions again as your child's language skills grow, ensuring a balance between asking and telling.



Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to remember the lyrics to a song when it's on repeat? Well, our little ones learn in a similar way! This strategy involves using repetitive, familiar phrases with intentional pauses, giving your child a chance to join in and finish the phrase. It's a bit like a conversation dance, and it's a fun, engaging way to encourage active communication.

The more opportunities your child has to hear a word, the more opportunities they have to learn it.

In a study conducted by Zevenbergen and Whitehurst (2003), scripted routines and phrases were shown to be beneficial in expanding the child's vocabulary. The repetition of these phrases provided the children with a familiar framework, within which they could predict and understand new words.



## TO USE SCRIPTED PHRASES, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Pick familiar phrases or sentences that your child knows and understands.
2. Say the chosen phrase or sentence, but intentionally skip a word or part for your child to complete.
3. Give your child plenty of time to think and respond by filling in the gap.
4. If they don't respond after a short pause, you can complete the phrase for them.
5. Encourage your child's involvement and cheer them on when they fill in the blank, this boosts confidence and willingness to engage in more language activities.
6. Slowly add new words or concepts to the phrases to help your child learn more vocabulary and understand language better.



Remember those childhood songs that still get stuck in your head? There's a reason for that! By engaging your child in singing and chanting rhymes, you're tapping into the power of rhythm, repetition, and melody. This fun method not only sparks joy but also boosts your child's communication skills. Plus, it teaches skills such as gross and fine motor imitation, following directions, body parts, basic concepts, new vocabulary, and much more!

A study by Ilari et al. (2016) showed that singing along to nursery rhymes and songs increased vocabulary acquisition in young children. It was observed that the combination of music, rhythm, and language made words more memorable for children.



## TO USE SING ALONGS, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Pick fun, easy-to-understand songs or nursery rhymes that your child likes.
2. Sing or recite these together, making sure your language is clear and lively.
3. Encourage your child to participate by repeating words or doing the actions that go with the song.
4. Pause the song sometimes, this gives your child a chance to ask for more, whether through pointing, sounds, words, or gestures.
5. Emphasize key words, sounds, and rhymes during your sing-along.
6. Praise your child when they join in, boosting their confidence and making language activities more fun for them.



Imagine opening up a whole new world right from your living room! That's the power of books. Reading together isn't just about telling a story, it's an enriching experience that builds your child's speech and language skills through new vocabulary, sentence structures, and the art of storytelling.

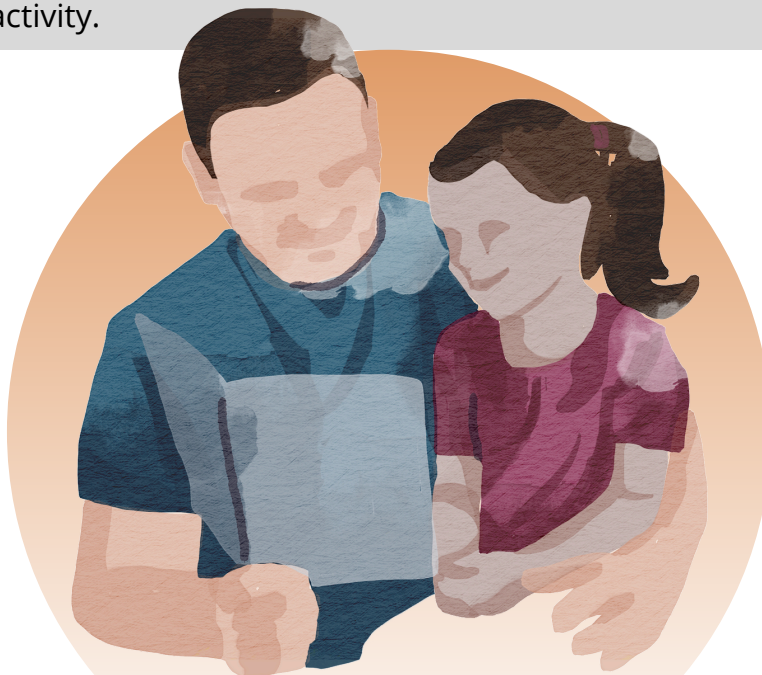
Reading **with** your child is more effective than simply reading **to them**. Instead of just reading a book from cover to cover, you can view reading time as an opportunity for conversation.

In a study by Farrant and Zubrick (2013), parents' engagement in shared book reading was associated with better language outcomes at age 4, and with literacy achievement in later years. This again demonstrates the importance of interactive reading experiences for children's language development.



## TO USE READING BOOKS, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Choose engaging, age-suitable books that your child is interested in.
2. Pay attention to their reactions and body language to figure out what really grabs their attention, using this as a focus for conversation.
3. Read the book together, using lively, clear language to tell the story.
4. Promote interaction by waiting 5-10 seconds giving them a chance to respond, asking open-ended questions, or commenting to involve them in the storytelling.
5. Listen carefully to your child's ideas and take turns to make conversation a two-way street.
6. Point out and discuss pictures, words, and ideas in the book to help their understanding and language development.
7. Praise your child when they join in, boosting their confidence and making reading a fun, language-learning activity.





Picture this: your kiddo is a spaceship commander exploring a new planet or a chef cooking up a delicious meal in their make-believe kitchen. Welcome to 'Imaginary Play' - a fantastic world that's all about creativity, social skills, problem-solving, and communication. By diving into pretend play, we can ignite their imagination while also fueling language development. In their pretend world, words and ideas can fly freely, making learning fun and engaging. So, let's put on our pretend hats and get playing!

A study by Lillard et al. (2013) found that children who engage in pretend play tend to exhibit better linguistic skills. These children have been observed to use more advanced sentence structures, a larger vocabulary, and demonstrate a better understanding of the rules of language compared to their peers who do not engage in pretend play.



## TO USE IMAGINARY PLAY, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Offer a range of pretend play toys like puppets, dress-up clothes, or play kitchen sets for your child to enjoy.
2. Focus on one set at a time (like dress-up clothes), and watch how your child interacts.
3. Join the fun by copying your child's actions, letting them lead the play.
4. Occasionally, spice up playtime by introducing new pretend scenarios, such as checking a doll's heartbeat with a toy stethoscope, and see your child's reaction.
5. Celebrate your child's involvement with encouragement and praise, building their confidence and love for language-based activities.



Think of recasting like a friendly echo with a twist. When your child says something, you echo it back, but you tweak it to make it more grammatically correct or complex. By hearing their thoughts and ideas restated in a different way, they pick up new language skills without even realizing it. So, next time your little one says something, try giving it a recast. You'll be surprised at how this simple strategy can boost their language development!

A study by Nelson (2013) suggests that recasting can be especially effective in enhancing language acquisition in children. The researcher reported that children who experienced recasting from their parents or caregivers showed increased complexity in their own language use over time.



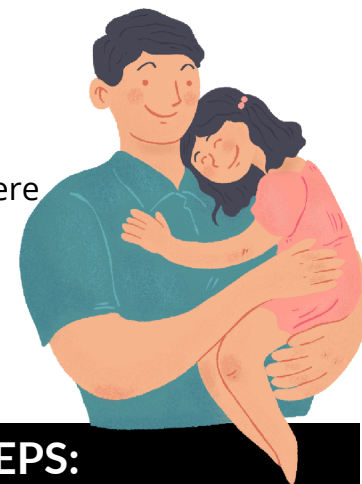
### TO USE RECASTING, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Listen closely to what your child says during talks or play.
2. Spot sentences that you can reshape or expand for better grammar or complexity.
3. Repeat the sentence in a new way, keeping the conversation natural and supportive. For instance, if your child says, "Doggie run," you could recast it as, "Yes, the dog is running."
4. Know that it's okay if your child doesn't repeat the recasted sentence.
5. Urge your child to react to or understand the recasted sentence, helping them grasp the corrected language.
6. Give positive feedback when your child uses the corrected language in their own speech.



It might sound mischievous, but it's all in the name of learning! 'Sabotage' is a language strategy where we purposely set up scenarios that require our kiddos to express their needs or wants. For example, you might 'forget' to put their favorite toy within reach or 'accidentally' bring them water in a new cup. These little setups encourage your child to use their words to solve problems, make requests, and engage in meaningful conversations.

A study by Fey et al. (2006) found that that intentional communicative obstacles promoted the use of longer and more complex utterances in toddlers. The use of "sabotage" techniques, such as creating a situation where a child needs to request assistance, can significantly boost expressive language development in young children.



## TO USE SABOTAGE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Pick an activity or item your child loves or needs: It could be a favorite toy, snack, or daily routine.
2. Set up a communication hurdle: Deliberately make a situation where your child can't get the item or finish the activity without your assistance. For instance, store a wanted toy in a jar they can't open or "miss" a vital step in a usual routine.
3. Watch and wait: Allow your child the time to notice the problem and try to communicate their need or desire. Practice patience and resist solving the problem too swiftly.
4. React to their communication: Acknowledge their communication effort, whether through words, gestures, or sounds, and provide the wanted item or help.
5. Reinforce the interaction: Applaud your child for their successful communication and highlight the importance of using language to express their needs and wants.



Getting up close and personal can do wonders for your little one's language development. 'Face to Face' is all about making sure you maintain eye contact and stay close to your child during your interactions. This simple act not only strengthens your emotional bond, but also boosts their focus and attention. When your face is in their line of sight, your child can better watch your mouth as you talk, picking up on those subtle speech cues.

Tamis-LeMonda, Bornstein, and Baumwell (2001) found that parents who frequently engaged in face-to-face interactions with their infants had children with more advanced language skills. The close proximity and eye contact during these interactions facilitate social and emotional connections, which are key for language development.



### TO USE FACE TO FACE, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. Get down to your child's eye level during playtime or chats, creating a warm and engaging atmosphere.
2. Make eye contact and use facial expressions to add depth to your words and emotions.
3. Invite your child to share thoughts or answer open-ended questions, sparking interaction.
4. Always reward your child's efforts with praise, boosting their confidence and desire to communicate.
5. Make sure to respect your child's comfort zone by adjusting how close you are and your eye contact, making every interaction a positive one.



Wow! That's a lot of different language strategies.

Now what?

I get it - seeing all these strategies at once might seem a bit overwhelming. You might be wondering,

"How can I possibly use all of these at once?"

"Where do I even begin?"

Remember, the key here isn't to juggle all strategies at once, but rather to make small, consistent efforts. So, here's a simple plan:

1. Start by picking just one strategy. Just one.
2. Dedicate 5-10 minutes each day to consciously use this strategy in your interactions with your child.



**GET ON  
THEIR LEVEL**



**LIMIT  
DISTRACTIONS**



**HAVE  
FUN**

**AS YOU BECOME MORE COMFORTABLE  
WITH 1 STRATEGY, YOU CAN:**

1. Increase frequency. Use the strategy for an extended period or more frequently throughout the day or week.
2. Choose another strategy. Select an additional strategy and repeat the process.



## Overcoming Barriers and Building Success

### Consistent Application in the Midst of Busy Schedules

- We all have long days. But even in those moments of fatigue, you can turn language practice sessions into bonding activities that you and your child both look forward to. Remember, these strategies don't need to be lengthy, grueling sessions. In fact, consistency in small doses can often be more effective. For example, during bath time, you can incorporate the 'Labeling' strategy by naming the objects your child interacts with ("Look, that's a duck!").
  - During meal times: Discuss what you're eating, the tastes, textures, and colors. If possible, get your child involved in the preparation process.
  - Bedtime routines: Reading a bedtime story provides a wealth of opportunities for language learning. Discuss the characters, what's happening, and what might happen next.
  - During play: Narrate what you're doing and what your child is doing. For example, "Mommy's making the teddy bear jump. Can you make your teddy bear jump too?"

### Seamlessly Integrating Language Strategies

- Make language practice a natural part of your day-to-day activities. Turn mundane routines into opportunities for learning. While cooking, involve your child by talking about the ingredients you're using and the steps you're following. This can be a fun way to learn new words and concepts!
  - During grocery shopping: Talk about what you're buying, its uses, and even where it comes from.
  - While doing laundry: Describe the process. Talk about sorting colors, pouring detergent, the sound of the washing machine, etc.
  - During a walk in the park: Discuss what you see, hear, smell, and feel. This is a great opportunity to introduce new vocabulary.

### Managing Emotions for Positive Learning

- It's normal to feel a range of emotions as a parent, from frustration to guilt. These feelings are a sign of your deep love and concern for your child's wellbeing. Remember, though, to set realistic expectations for yourself and your child. Instead of aiming for perfection, focus on progress and the joy of the journey.
  - Dealing with frustration: When your child is struggling to express themselves, remind yourself to stay patient and calmly encourage them. Model the correct expression and reinforce their efforts.
  - Handling impatience: If progress seems slow, remind yourself that every child learns at their own pace. Celebrate the small victories along the way.
  - Coping with guilt: If you miss a day of practice, remind yourself that it's okay. Consistency doesn't mean perfection. Resume the activities the next day without guilt.



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## Overcoming Barriers and Building Success

### Overcoming Guilt and Redefining Parenting

- Every child is unique, and so is every parent. What works for one family might not work for another. It's important to understand this and let go of unfair comparisons. Your ideal parenting style is what best supports your child's individual needs. Find strategies that align with your lifestyle and values, and remember, it's okay to tweak them as needed.
  - Dealing with comparison: If you notice your child's peers are seemingly advancing quicker, remind yourself that every child develops at their own pace. Your focus is your child's growth, not how they compare to others.
  - Managing societal pressures: If you feel societal expectations are too high, focus on what you think is best for your child. Your child's needs are paramount.
  - Balancing work and parenting: Find a balance that suits you and your family. Use the time you have effectively, rather than feeling guilty about the time you don't have.

### Building Confidence and Competence

- You might sometimes feel inadequate or pressured. But remember, you are your child's first teacher, and no one knows them better than you do. Each time you engage with them using a language strategy, you're building your confidence and competence. And remember, every small step of progress is a win!
  - Dealing with self-doubt: Every time you successfully use a language strategy, you're not just helping your child; you're also improving your own skills. Keep track of these successes to remind yourself of your abilities.
  - Handling feelings of incompetence: Remember, there's no 'right' way to teach your child. The fact you're trying and learning is already a significant achievement.
  - Building self-efficacy: With each new word or phrase your child learns, take pride in the role you played in their development. This boosts your confidence in your ability to support your child's language learning.

**Embrace your unique journey of supporting your child's language development and remember to celebrate every milestone along the way. Together, you can conquer the hurdles and create an environment where your child thrives.**



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Highlighting your child's achievements is more than just making them feel good - it's a stepping stone towards nurturing their self-confidence and their language growth.

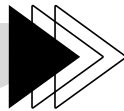
When you celebrate and encourage the actions you appreciate, your child will instinctively understand what behaviors are appreciated and repeat them more often.



## SPECIFIC PRAISE

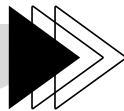
works best because your child knows exactly what you like.

"GOOD JOB"



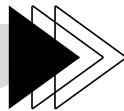
"GOOD JOB USING YOUR LISTENING EARS"

"AWESOME JOB"



"AWESOME JOB PUTTING YOUR TOYS AWAY"

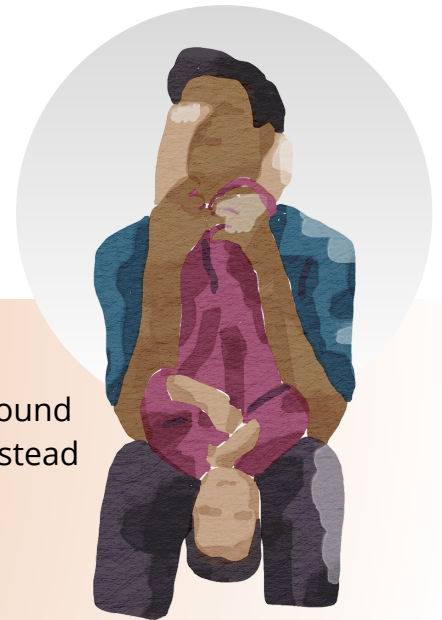
"GREAT WORK"



"GREAT WORK SHARING WITH YOUR BROTHER!"

## PRAISE COMMUNICATION ATTEMPTS

As your child continues learning to talk, the words they say may not sound exactly like how an adult says them, for example they may say "tat" instead of 'cat'. Praise your child's attempts and model correct production of words.





You can support long term success through consistent, positive repetition.



## Consistency Over Perfection

As we approach the end of this guide and prepare to set you off on your exciting journey, let's highlight one crucial principle: this is all about consistency and not perfection. Language development is a journey with its unique highs, lows, and learning curves.

There will be days when you feel like a language master, effortlessly guiding your child's communication skills, and there will be others where progress seems elusive. But here's the thing: each day is a step forward, and every effort, no matter how small, contributes to your child's language progress. It's the small, consistent actions that accumulate into big gains over time.

So, let go of the quest for perfect execution. Instead, strive for regular, purposeful interactions with your child, using these strategies as your roadmap. Persist, engage, and keep trying. Remember, it's about progress, not perfection.

And whenever you feel unsure or need a refresher, return to this guide. Let it serve as your reference point, your reassurance, and your reminder that you are doing an extraordinary job. Because, truly, you are. And I'm here, cheering you on every step of the way on this remarkable journey.

## Next Steps

You've started on a powerful journey with these strategies. To see faster results and receive personalized guidance, enroll in the Talk Time Course today. My course offers detailed video tutorials, progress tracking, and interactive support designed to ensure success.



**1. Who is this e-book intended for?** This e-book is designed specifically for parents and caregivers of children aged 0-5 years. It's a comprehensive guide for supporting your child's language development journey.

**2. What topics does this e-book cover?** My e-book provides practical tips and strategies on various aspects of early language development. Topics covered include understanding language development terminology, building confidence in assisting your child's language development, recognizing and appreciating small progress, and effectively managing time.

**3. Is this e-book suitable for bilingual parents or those who wish their children to be bilingual?** Absolutely! The strategies and tips provided in this e-book can be applied to both monolingual and bilingual language development. I also debunk some common myths about bilingualism, such as it causing language delays.

**4. I heard that using sign language with infants and toddlers can delay their verbal speech. Is this true?** No, this is a common myth. Research has shown that using sign language can actually facilitate verbal language development. It provides a means of communication before the child develops the physical ability to speak and can decrease frustration for both the child and parent.

**5. I've heard that screens can help my child learn language. Is this true?** While some educational programs can be beneficial, screen time should not replace interaction with caregivers and other children. My e-book emphasizes the importance of active participation and interaction in your child's language learning journey.

**6. I'm a busy parent. How much extra time each day will I need to implement these strategies?** The strategies in the e-book are designed to be incorporated into your everyday interactions and routines with your child. It's not about finding extra time; it's about using the time you already have more effectively.

**7. Is this e-book based on scientific research?** Yes, all the advice and strategies provided in the e-book are based on scientific research and best practices in the field of early language development.

**8. Will this e-book help if my child has a language delay?** Yes! My e-book provides strategies to support language development in all children. However, if you suspect your child has a language delay, I recommend seeking advice from a healthcare professional or speech-language pathologist. The e-book can serve as a supplementary resource.

**9. How can I make the process of language learning fun for my child?** My e-book contains numerous tips and strategies for turning everyday interactions into fun, playful language-learning opportunities. The key is to make learning a natural and enjoyable part of your child's daily life.



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- 10. My child is already 5 years old. Can I still use the strategies from this e-book?** Yes, while the book is aimed primarily at parents with children aged 0-5, many of the strategies and principles can be adapted and applied to older children as well. It's never too late to support your child's language development.
- 11. Can I still benefit from this e-book if I am not a native English speaker?** Absolutely! The strategies and concepts explained in the e-book can be applied in any language.
- 12. What if my child is already going to speech therapy? Is this e-book still useful?** Yes, this e-book can complement the work you're doing with a speech-language pathologist. It provides you with additional tools and strategies to support your child's language development at home.
- 13. I've heard that it's bad to correct my child's speech errors. Is that true?** Correcting speech errors is a delicate balance. It's important to encourage your child to express themselves, even if they make mistakes. My e-book includes a section on how to gently guide your child's language correction in a supportive, positive way.
- 14. Is it bad if my child talks to himself/herself?** Not at all! Self-talk can be a powerful tool for language development. It's a sign that your child is practicing language skills. I provide more insights on this in my e-book.
- 15. I've heard that boys develop language skills slower than girls. Is that true?** While research shows that there can be small differences in language development between boys and girls, these differences are not significant and there is a lot of overlap. Each child is unique and develops at their own pace.
- 16. I've noticed other children of the same age speaking more than my child. Should I be worried?** It's natural to compare your child's development to others, but it's important to remember that children develop at their own pace. The e-book provides information on typical language milestones but also emphasizes that variation is normal. If you have concerns, it's always best to consult with a healthcare professional.
- 17. How soon can I expect to see improvements in my child's language skills after implementing the strategies from this e-book?** Language development is a gradual process, and progress may not be immediately obvious. However, by consistently applying the strategies from this e-book, you should start to notice significant improvements over time.
- 18. Is the e-book accessible on all devices?** Yes, the e-book is in a format that can be accessed on any device - from your desktop computer to your smartphone or tablet. You can take these strategies with you wherever you go.
- 19. Can I get a refund if I'm not satisfied with the e-book?** Yes, I offer a no-questions-asked money-back guarantee. If you're not satisfied with the e-book, just let me know within 30 days of purchase and I'll refund your money in full.



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Put a sticker or mark on the days you have used a strategy! Which one?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



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# THANK YOU

Dear reader,

Firstly, thank you for choosing "Talk Time with Your Child." As a speech-language pathologist, I've dedicated my career to creating these strategies, and it's rewarding to see them work for parents like you.

If these strategies have positively impacted your child's communication journey, I'd love to hear about it!

Your experience could inspire and guide other parents on a similar path, showing them the power of these science-backed strategies.

And if you ever have questions or need clarification, please feel free to reach out at [eli.lowham@slpsmart.com](mailto:eli.lowham@slpsmart.com). I'm here to support you every step of the way.

Thank you for being part of our community—your voice and story matter!

Warm regards,

*Eli Lowham*



**Eli Lowham, M.S. CCC-SLP**

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