

Communication opportunities at home –

What can I do at home to help my child communicate better

- Give your child your “*undivided attention*” when he/she is trying to interact with you. Children learn to communicate best by interacting with others throughout the day
- Verbalize what your child is telling you with behavior or gestures, such as “oh, you’re mad. You want more juice. “ , then verbally model “want more juice”.
- Narrate your day.....talk about what you’re doing, using shorter utterances and naming the items that you’re using, (see the page about “Embedded schedules” on this website for more examples).
- *Speak in shorter utterances*!! It will help your child better understand and will model verbalizations for them. If they are only saying one word utterances, then use two word utterances with them throughout the day. If they are saying two word utterances, then use three word utterances while you’re cooking, dressing them, cleaning the house, etc.
- If your child isn’t talking yet, then model words and utterances by pointing to symbols on the core vocabulary board while you are talking, such as / more, go, want, like, stop, all done/. For an extensive list of utterances go the “Core vocabulary board” pages on our website.
- When interacting with your child, use real objects, real pictures and books!! These are much better than screens, technology and apps.
- *An app will NEVER replace a lap*!! Your child will learn to communicate best by interacting with you and others rather than watching an app on a device.
- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, after the age of two children can be on devices but it is recommended that they do so with adults while interacting and commenting. Adults can use comments such as, “I see that dog....ruff, ruff. I like that dog. He’s funny! “
- Book time is a great time to work on communication and language also. Research shows that young children and those with speech/language delays benefit more from talking about books than reading them. We talk about what we see, “I see a dog. He’s running fast. He’s barking loud. Oh no, it’s scary”. You can model shorter utterances while looking at the pictures to help your child understand and to model utterances as well as learn vocabulary.
- Try to be very animated and engaging while reading books, playing with your child and narrating your day. This will engage your child, draw him/her into the interaction and affirm that you enjoy interacting together.
- You can use words or visual pictures to “set up” what the expectation, plan or schedule will be which will then help your child to understand what is coming next and what you’d like him/her to do. For example, before dinner you want your child to clean up toys so you might say, “Five more minutes to play, then clean up time. After clean up, then dinner”. You could also make a schedule of pictures which may show a clean-up, then eating dinner. The preschool staff can help with this schedule of pictures, starting with “First, then” visuals or a daily schedule of pictures.