

Incorporate These Strategies To Help Facilitate Expressive Language Skills

Face your child while you are interacting with him/her. Get down to your child's level so your face is at the same level as theirs. Look at your child so that he/she can see your face clearly. It is important that your child be able to clearly see your mouth so that they can see what your lips, tongue, and teeth are doing to help you produce sounds. It is also important because humans rely on non verbal communication (such as facial expressions) to relay information about what we are talking about.



Engage in Parallel Talk. Parallel talk is narrating your child's actions. Starting with simpler/shorter phrases could increase your child's comprehension. Parallel talk provides opportunities for your child to hear more vocabulary related to the things that he/she is using or doing. Doing this throughout the day allows them to learn new vocabulary words and meanings within context.

Narrate your day. Also known as self talk, it simply means that you are talking about what you are doing and the familiar items you are using. Again, this provides your child the opportunity to be exposed to more words in context.

Describe verbal routines. Narrate your daily activities (also known as embedded schedules * See [Embedded Schedules](#) under the [USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AT HOME](#) tab on the Table of Contents page of the website). You will use the same language to describe routine or daily activities such as getting dressed. This provides them with exposure to more language in expected ways. If you engage in this every day, they will begin to anticipate the language associated with that activity and may be able to fill in the blanks for some of those familiar phrases i.e. model "socks on, pants on, arms in" as they get dressed. Eventually, while you are helping your child put there socks on, you will pause/wait after you say "socks" (expectant pause) and your child may say "on!" At this time, you will verbally reinforce the comment ("sock on") as well as make it meaningful by putting his/her sock on.

Promote Communication Temptations. You can think of this as feigning ignorance or sabotoge. This strategy encourages your child to initiate an interaction. You can pretend that you don't know how to use something and have your child show you. If you are playing with

blocks, you can try banging them together. When they look at you funny, you can ask “no? what should we do with blocks?” If they pantomime building or actually start building, you can say “oh right, we can build (with blocks!)” You can also place things out of reach or in clear containers that they cannot open. Again, this offers them opportunities to practice initiating interactions as well as practicing vocabulary and requesting (i.e. I want blocks, I want open, I want more blocks, etc.). For children with more language, they can practice describing vocabulary if there are different colored or sized items i.e. I want blue car, I want big truck, etc. in response to “which car do you want?”

Expand their language. Expand on your child’s utterance by adding 1-3 words that provides additional information. You are now modeling the next step that you eventually want them to take in their language development. So if your child looks around the room and says “bear,” you can respond back “I see a bear” or “I want big/brown bear.”

Provide wait time. Wait time is essential as it offers them time to process your question and possibly formulate a response. If you do not get a response after several seconds, repeat the question and offer support (in the form of choices, verbal models, etc.).



Read and/or sing with your child. Reading a book several times and singing familiar songs provides multiple exposures to vocabulary. It allows children an opportunity to practice the new vocabulary. When reading, you do not have to read the words, you can take a picture walk (describe pictures), label items/actions to expand vocabulary, ask simple questions, model answers to questions, etc. Singing also exposes children to more vocabulary and rhyming. Singing the same song during specific activities provides them with additional opportunities to practice and may help with transitions between activities. Re-reading books also allows for an opportunity to practice skills within a familiar activity. During your second or third reading of a book, check to see if your child can provide you with more information than they could during the first reading and remember to keep continue to provide expansions and extensions by always adding just a little bit more information to what your child provided.

*See **Embedded Schedules** under the **USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AT HOME** for more great strategies