

Ways to Encourage Your Child's Speech and Language Development at Home

Speech and language skills support children's ability to communicate and engage with others, express and understand feelings, and help them understand the world around them.

Our teachers encourage speech and language development by creating a literacy-rich environment filled with pictures, books and words, and modeling language usage on a continuous basis. In our classrooms, books are readily accessible, materials are labeled with photos and words, and children's writing attempts are apparent. The constant access to expressive and receptive literature encourages children to explore printed text, listen for new vocabulary, make connections between printed words and illustrations, and to ask questions.



Below are some age-appropriate activities you can try with your child at home.

Infants & Toddlers (0-2 years)

- Encourage your child to make sounds back to you (i.e., “ma,” “da,” “ba”).
- Point out colors and shapes in books and in your environment.
- Gather a group of toy animals and sing “Old MacDonald.” Hold up each animal as you say its name and sound. Encourage your child to sing along and say the names of the animals with you.
- When your child begins to speak, repeat their words and add a word or two. Point to a toy car and ask what it is. When they respond “car,” say, “Yes, that is a bright red car.”

Beginners & Intermediates (2-4 years)

- Read a favorite book with your child. Ask questions about the characters and key events.
- Put on a play with dolls or puppets. Encourage your child to narrate and have conversations with you.
- Take a walk outdoors and ask your child questions about the weather, animals you see and sounds you hear.
- During a time with limited distractions (i.e., bath time or dinner), ask your child to talk about their day. Use questions like, “Who did you play with today?” and “What did you draw at school?”

Pre-K & Pre-K2 (4-5 years)

- Ask your child to make up their own short story and tell it aloud.
- Encourage your child to tell you how to do something, such as make a sandwich or draw a picture. This will help them communicate something they wouldn't normally think about.
- While shopping, ask your child to describe each item you buy. Listen for words like “small” and “large,” “round” and “square,” and “heavy” and “light.”
- Practice writing, language and memory by pretending you and your child are at a restaurant. Encourage them to fulfill orders by writing down what you say.