

Building Your Child's Language

When your child is starting to put words together...



✓ Talk about the things your child sees and does

Throughout the day:

- When playing, label actions like *swing*, *jump*, and *run*.
- When getting dressed, label clothing like *sock*, *pants*, *shirt*.
- At snack-time, label actions like “*Eat the apple*”, “*Open my juice*.”

Repeat words over and over.

If your child points to something they want, **tell** them the word they need to use and **wait** for them to try to say it.

✓ Expand what your child says

Add **one or two words** to what your child says.

- If your child says “*Ball*”, you can say “*Kick the ball*.”
- If your child says “*Moo*” you can say “*The cow says moo*.”

Use **different types of words** including names of objects, actions, feelings, descriptions, and locations.

✓ Wait

Give your child a chance to talk by **waiting** for them to respond, start, or comment.

For example, if a cup falls on the floor, wait for your child to respond with a look, sound, or word.

✓ Beware of questions!

Turn your questions into **comments**.

- Instead of asking “*What’s this?*” say “*I see a truck!*”
- Instead of asking “*What colour is that?*” say “*It’s a red ball!*”

Offer **choices**.

- Instead of asking “*What do you want to drink?*” ask “*Milk or juice?*”

✓ Play with your child

Playing with your child develops skills like listening, talking, turn-taking, vocabulary, and imagination.

Be face-to-face with your child.

Play like a child. Don’t worry about following rules or playing with toys in a certain way. You don’t need new and expensive toys. Just use your imagination and **have fun!**

Limit screen time (such as computer, TV, tablet). *The Canadian Pediatric Society* recommends **no screen time** for children under two years old, and no more than **one hour a day** for children 2 to 4 years old.

For more information
Contact your Speech-Language Pathologist
or
Your local Public Health Unit