

Create Opportunities for Your Child to Communicate

Children are more likely to communicate when there is a **reason** to communicate. You can create **opportunities** by using communication temptations. The key is that you should wait for your child to tell you or show you what they want. Then, when you respond, your child will learn that communication works!

How Can You Create Opportunities?

- Open a jar of bubbles, blow the bubbles and then stop.

Wait for your child to communicate they want more.

- Provide snack foods in small portions. Give your child one piece, and hold on to rest.

Wait for your child to communicate they want more.

- Put your child's favourite toy on the counter, out of their reach or in a clear container they can't open.

Wait for your child to communicate they want the toy.



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- Be a 'keeper of pieces' of a toy (for example, train tracks or puzzle pieces). Hand your child one piece and hold on to the rest.

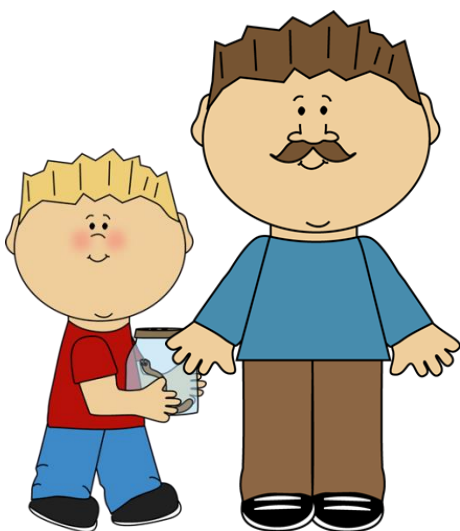
Wait for your child to communicate they want a piece.

- Do something unexpected. Put on one of your child's shoes and forget to put on the other shoe. Put your child's pants on their head.

Wait for your child to react.

- During physical play, suddenly stop the play. For example, tickle your child, then suddenly stop. Push your child on a swing, and then suddenly stop.

Wait for your child to communicate that they want you to continue.



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Things to Remember

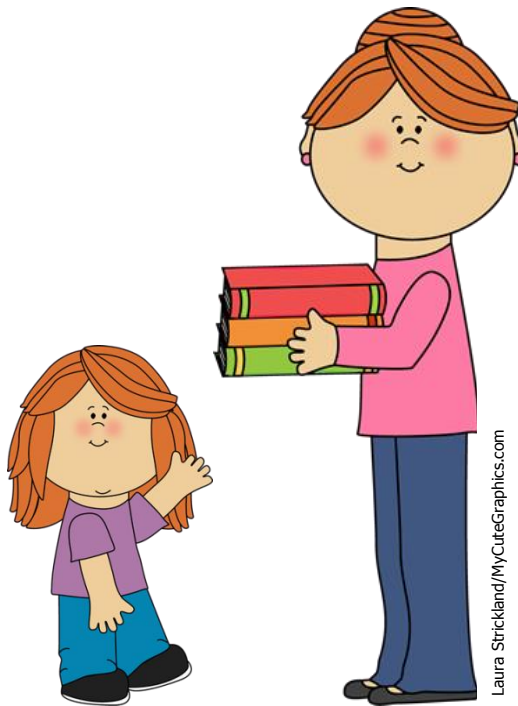
- Keep in mind your child's level of communication.

A child who doesn't talk yet may communicate with gestures (pointing, reaching) or noises (grunting, "ahhh").

A child who is starting to talk may communicate with simple words ("apple", "train") and phrases ("shoe on", "more tickles").

- Respond positively when your child makes their best effort to communicate.

- It's okay to model the word you want your child to say. But, then wait - give your child time to try to say it too.
- You can model the word a few times. Your child might need to hear a word more than once before they try to say it.
- You *do* want to encourage your child, but you *don't* want to frustrate or upset them.
- Choose activities your child enjoys. They will be more likely to communicate when they are having fun. If they are not interested, move on!
- You can create lots of these opportunities every day. Remember - your child needs repetition and practice!



For more information

Contact your Speech-Language Pathologist or your local Public Health Unit

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.