

# Early Language



## When your child is making sounds and using gestures...

- ✓ Respond to **all of your child's attempts** to communicate.  
Remember: Communication includes gestures, sounds and words.
- ✓ **Watch** for what interests your child and talk about those things. Follow your child's lead.
- ✓ Get down to your child's level. Be **face-to-face** with your child.
- ✓ **Say the word** that your child doesn't know or can't say.  
If your child points to a cookie and says "Uh", you can say "Cookie!"
- ✓ Use words that are **useful** to your child.  
For now, it is more important for your child to use the names of family members, toys, food, clothing, and actions.  
It is less important for your child to use words like "please" and "thank you", and numbers, letters, and colours.
- ✓ **Repeat, repeat, repeat.**  
Your child needs to hear a word many times in order to learn it.  
You can say "Want water?", "Pour the water", "Drink water."
- ✓ Keep your sentences **short and simple**.  
For example, "Shoes off", "Open the door", "Want a cookie?"
- ✓ Give your child **time** to communicate.  
If a cup falls on the floor, wait for your child to respond with a look, sound, or word.
- ✓ **Create opportunities** for your child to communicate.  
For example:
  - Only give your child a small piece of banana and wait for them to show that they want more.
  - Put your child's favourite toy in a clear, closed container and wait for them to show they want it.

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