Chapter 1
The Early Communicator Stage

Jake plays physical games like Chase and Tickles over and over again with his parents and his brother. Jake’s mother holds him by his shoulders and says, “Ready, set...” and then waits for him to look at her and shout, “Go!” to let her know it’s time to begin the chase. Mom usually gets tired of the game before Jake does! Sometimes, Jake will start the game with people other than his mother by saying, “Go!” Jake uses a few other words, too. Usually, he asks his mother to open the raisin box by making the “open” hand sign he learned at his preschool, but sometimes he says, “Open.”

A child at the Requester stage is just beginning to realize that his actions can have an effect on you. By pulling or leading you, he is able to ask you for things he needs or enjoys. He especially likes playing physical People Games like Tickles and Peek-a-boo; when you pause during the game, he may look at you or move his body to get you to keep playing.

Expect the child at the Requester stage to do some of the following:

• interact with you briefly
• use sounds to calm or focus himself
• echo a few words to calm or focus himself
• reach for what he wants
• communicate mainly when he needs something by leading you or taking your hand
• request that you continue a physical People Game like Tickles or a game of Chase with eye contact and/or smiles and/or body movement and/or sounds
• occasionally follow familiar directions if he can see what he has to do
• understand the steps in familiar routines

The Requester is beginning to understand that he can ask you to do things by pulling or leading you.

Kevin asks Kevin asks to be taken to the park by pulling his mother to the door.
Another cookie?
Kevin also asks for cookies by pulling his father to them.
Okay. We’ll go to the park now! Another cookie?

A cookie?

Kevin asks to be taken to the park by pulling his mother to the door. Kevin also asks for cookies by pulling his father to them.

The Early Communicator can consistently use the same gesture, sound or word to ask for things he likes and to tell you that he wants to keep playing a game after it has started.

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Help your child increase his use of gestures, signs, pictures or words to make requests in new situations

Jake always asks his mother to open the raisin box by using the word “open” and a hand sign, just as he always asks for the game of Chase by saying, “Ready! Set! Go!” His parents want him to learn that the words “open” and “Ready, set, go!” can be used in other situations.

Interaction between you and your child is getting easier and lasting longer, especially in rough-and-tumble games and songs.

Teach your child to take turns consistently with you and other people in physical People Games

Remember Jake, the little boy in Chapter 1, who loves to get chased by his parents? Jake knows that he can start the game by saying, “Go!” after his parents say, “Ready, set…”

Encourage your child to initiate some physical games rather than waiting for you to do so

After Jake has played “Ready! Set! Go!” many times with his mother, the next step is for him to initiate the game with his older brother, Jesse. His mother helps by holding on to Jake while Jesse begins to run away. Wanting the game to begin, Jake says, “Ready, set, go!” and then begins the chase.

Encourage your Early Communicator to initiate his favourite games and play with other familiar people besides you.

The game can only start after Jake takes his turn.

Jake signs and says “open” to ask for his favourite treat…

…so his father encourages Jake to use the same hand sign and word to ask him to open the car door.

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