



October 2016



Follow the child’s lead in conversations

Let children start the conversation and follow their lead by responding with interest to what they communicate with sounds, gestures or words. These kinds of conversations motivate children to talk, promote their language development and are associated with later academic success.



Hudson, S., Levickis, P., Down, K., Nicholls, R., & Wake, M. (2015). Maternal responsiveness predicts language at ages 3 and 4. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 50(1), 136-142.

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23/30 | 24/31 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |

LEARNING TO TALK

For children who have started to use words and form short sentences

TALKING TO LEARN

For children who talk in complete sentences

Daily Activities

Get down to the child’s level and pay attention to how he might be sending messages with gestures as well as with words. Copy the child’s gesture as you respond. For example, during snack time, if he points to a cracker and says “cracker,” you can also point to the cracker and say, “Ok. Let’s have some crackers for snack.”



While drawing with a child, wait for him to tell you something about what he’s drawing. Then make an enthusiastic comment, followed by an open-ended question. For example, if he says, “I drew a snake,” you can reply with, “Wow, what a long snake! Where is a long snake like that going to live?”

Play Time

When in doubt, don’t hesitate to imitate. For example, if a child is pushing a car across the floor, get your own car and push it across the floor too while you make a comment like, “My car is going fast too!” If the child is making a sound (e.g., “vroom”), make that sound too.



Set up a pretend bakery using playdough as the dough. When a child mentions what she wants to bake, follow her lead and ask her questions that encourage her to draw on her existing knowledge. For example, “What ingredients will go inside your cookies?” and “How long will you bake it in the oven for?”

Book Reading

While sharing a book, don’t worry about reading it in order from start to finish. If a child decides to turn back to a previous page, go with the flow and make an enthusiastic comment like, “Oh, look, we’re back on the page with the rabbit! You really like that rabbit!”



Pause during book reading to wait for a child to comment on something that interests her. Then follow her lead by replying with a question that encourages her to make a comparison. For example, “Yes, the Gruffalo is very big! Can you think of any other animals that are as big as the Gruffalo?”

On the Go

While on a walk, wait for the child to notice something and respond to any words he might use or sounds or gestures he might make. For example, if he points to a dog, take the time to pause and point at the dog too, as you say, “Yes, that’s a dog! He looks like he wants to play!”



While on a day trip to the zoo, wait for the child to show interest in a particular animal, and then ask a question that both shows your interest and encourages him to think. For example, “Yes, that’s a tiger sleeping under that rock! Why do you think he sleeps under there instead of out in the sun?”