

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE

Your paediatrician might ask you how many words is your child is saying to informally assess your child's language ability, however, there are many more milestones that precedes using words expressively.

Reciprocal Play: Your child makes a noise as you wait expectantly.

Imitates Sounds: Your child copies various sounds, such as raspberries and other silly sounds.

Joint Interest: Joint attention is when you and your child share the same interest in an item.

Social Play: Your child initiates "chase" or rolling a ball back and forth. Your child is interested in 'Peek-a-boo'.

Imitates Movement: Your child imitates movements such as clapping hands.

Points to Objects: He points to objects to show you or ask what it is.

Gesturing: Representational gestures include waving bye bye and putting arms up to indicate that your child wants to be held.

Social referencing: Your child looks over at you while he plays to make sure you are watching.

Push & Pull: Your child pushes and pulls you to things they want. They might take your hand and lead you around the house.

When playing with your child it is important for him/her to use language spontaneously. It is quite easy to ask your child questions all da. This limits his/her language. Instead, focus on saying a statement.

The 3:1 Rule will help you reduce the number of questions you ask your child and increase the number of statements you make.

Try to play with your child intentionally, using the 3:1 Rule for a few minutes each day. Sit down with your child and some toys that he/she enjoys playing with. While you play, make three comments for one question you ask.

Playing Kitchen

Comments:

I'm the chef!
I made a hot dog.
Oh, that's cold.
Pass the milk please

Questions:

Do you want ketchup?

Build the 3:1 Rule into your daily routine. Make comments while you're giving your child a bath, reading a goodnight book or when you're getting him/her dressed.

Incorporate the 3:1 Rule into your daily routines.



If your child has some words, but has not been using them spontaneously, try using the withholding strategy.

Withholding is a simple strategy where you intentionally wait before you give him/her something before he communicates with you.

You know your child so well that you can anticipate most of his/her needs. When your child points to something he wants, look at him and say "Tell me what you want" and wait and see what he responds. If he does not respond, you can give a verbal prompt, such as "say milk". Once your child responds verbally, give him what he wants. This strategy only works if your child has demonstrated a word in his vocabulary.

Practice

Get your child engaged in an activity. Grab a laundry basket and a train. Be silly and make it fun. Once your child is really excited and engaged, grab the train and hold it. Withhold the train until he asks for it saying "train" or "my turn".

