



Late Talkers

Strategies & Recommendations

Self-talk:

Talk about or describe what you are doing as you are doing it. For example, a mother who is feeding her baby might say, "I'm opening the fridge, I'm getting the food, now I'm closing the door. Let's eat!"

Parallel Talk:

Talk about or describe what your child is doing as they are doing it! For example, while the child is playing with blocks, the adult might say, "You're holding the block, the block is big, you're putting the block in the cup!"

Play:

Play is how children learn about their world, social interactions, and communication. During play children watch, explore, listen and imitate. They imitate your gestures, actions, sounds and words! Through play, children can learn to become excellent communicators!

Slow Down:

Slowing down gives children the time they need to figure out what you're doing with your mouth to create sounds. It also makes it easier for children to hear individual words so that they can start to imitate you when they are ready.

Talk, Talk and Talk some More:

The more we talk to our children, the more they are exposed to words they can eventually imitate! When we are talking about things that are meaningful to our children we are providing them with a language rich environment!

Imitation:

If we want our children to imitate us, why don't we show them how it's done? Start imitating your child's gestures, actions, sounds and words. If your child drops a toy and holds out his hands as if to say, 'What happened?' imitate the gesture and say, "Oh-oh". They don't have to imitate you, but they will learn about imitation.

Repetitive books:

Repetitive books or predictable texts help your child anticipate what word is coming next. After reading a book several times, your child will start to use the new words when you pause for a few seconds and anticipate them filling in the next word. Two excellent examples are: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Martin, B.) and *Who's Making That Smell* (Tyler, J.).



Wait:

Giving children time to respond or communicate can be very powerful. Children may need time to think about what has been said. They might need to figure out that it is their turn to say something. It can help to look at your child expectantly so they begin to understand it is their turn. They may need time to figure out what to do with their mouth, tongue and teeth to say what they want to say.

Respond to all Communication Attempts:

This is another strategy that teaches children that communication is powerful, fun and gets them what they want! The more we respond to their attempts the more likely they will try to communicate again! If your child looks up at a toy on the shelf you can say, "Drum, you want the drum" while pointing to the drum on the shelf. Next time your child might point to the drum and after many similar exchanges your child might say, "um" or "dum" and even someday "drum"!

Music and Songs:

The rhythm of music can be more meaningful to young children than the rhythm of speech. When children hear the same song over and over they begin to learn the rhythm and eventually learn some of the words. Just as I talked about 'waiting' with communication temptations, we can use the same strategy when we are singing. Start singing a song like you usually would, when you get to a repetitive part of a song, stop and wait to see if your child says or sings the next word. If not, say the word and see if your child imitates you. A great example is with 'Ring around the Rosie'. After singing and moving to this song many times, keep singing until you get to "husha husha we all fall....." keep standing and see if your child either says or sings "down".

Have Fun!

Children are more likely to learn if they are engaged and having fun!

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