

# Improving Communication in Young Children



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# How Do We Communicate?

- Communication can take several forms and it can be verbal or non-verbal.
  1. Behavior- A child may communicate a like or dislike through his behavior.
  2. Facial expressions- A child may communicate by his facial expressions ( frown, smile, grimace, etc)
  3. Gestures- A child may point to or motion towards desired items. He may also push away something that he dislikes.
  4. Signs- A child may use some actual sign language.
  5. Verbal- A child uses words to communicate wants and needs.

- In order for a child to use words he must hear them at least 2000 times when initially learning language.
- A child will communicate verbally if communication is functional for him and he must understand why it is important.

# 0-6 Months

- Quiets to sound
- Startles to loud sounds
- Turns head towards the source of sound
- Begins smiling
- Begins blowing raspberries, squealing, and enjoying vocal play with adults
- Look at a family member when named
  - Ex. Where's Daddy's?
- Start producing reduplicated babble ( mamama, nanana)
- Adults in the environment assign meaning to these rapid productions and thus shape the first words (baba).



# 7-12 Months

- Begin to produce babbling in which consonant and vowel may change
  - ( badidabu).
- Looks at common objects when their names are spoken
- Uncovers hidden toy (beginning of object permanence)
- Imitate intonation and speech sounds of others
- Understand ten words such as no, bed, and bye-bye.
- Follow simple one-step directions.
- They turn their head to their name
- Vocalize/ gesture to indicate wants and needs
- use a wide variety of sounds, intonations, and pitches
- They have their first word!!!



# 1-2 Years

- Understand approximately 200 words
- Produces 50 words
- One word utterances have a variety of meanings
- Beginning to use present progressive -ing
- Beginning to use plural /s/



# 2-3 Years

- Uses telegraphic speech
  - Object + Verb: “Mommy go”
  - Verb + Object: “Go car”
  - Subject + Verb + Object: “Mommy read book”
- Beginning to use question forms such as “What that?”
- Uses past tense -ed
- Uses prepositions “In” and “On”
- Produces 200-600 words
- Answer simple “Wh” questions
- Follows 2-step directions



# Ways to Help Your Child Communicate Better

- Follow the child's lead.
  - Let your child decide what the two of you will play with.
  - Go along with the activity that your child chooses
- Use a lot of facial expressions
  - Do not be afraid to be animated
  - Exaggerate emotions of silly ,happy, sad, etc..
- Naming of common objects
  - Label items for your child.
  - This will help your child to learn the names of various items.
- Learn categories.
  - Make a collage that includes pictures in the category.
  - Functions of items can be a category as well.

# Ways to Help Your Child Communicate Better

- Communicating wants and needs
  - Give your child choices whenever possible
  - Have your child pick from items
  - When offering choices, label items offered
  - When your child picks desired item, give the item a label
- Following simple directions
  - For example, “Get your shoes” or “Put the blocks away”
  - Assist your child as needed
  - More advanced directions can be added as the child is able.
- Learning vocabulary for daily routines
  - Talk to your child while you are performing an activity
  - Example “I am making a pie, I need some milk, I need some butter, etc.”

# Ways to Help Your Child Communicate Better

- Understanding the names and functions of objects
  - Place 3 to 5 objects on a tray.
  - Ask child to pick an object named.
  - Ask the child to name each item
  - Ask the child “Which one do we use to..... ?” (function questions)
  - Describe that object and have the child figure out which one you are talking about.
- Understand action words.
  - Play a Simon Says game to work on understanding action words.
    - (ie; Simon says walk, run, jump etc)
- Understand prepositions.
  - Play a game of hide and seek with toys.
  - Give child directions to follow involving putting items in various places

# Ways to Help Your Child Communicate Better

- Read books to your child.
  - Point to items in the pictures and tell your child what they are.
  - Have your child point to the items that are pictured on each page
  - Have your child name items pictured
  - Ask “Wh-” questions to encourage conversation about the story
  - It is okay to read the same books. Repetition is good!
- Modeling an appropriate production of a word
  - If your child’s speech is unintelligible then give them a word for what they might be talking about.
  - Ways to do this include :
    - Labeling the item your child is playing with
    - Giving a name to the action your child is doing

# Ways to Help Your Child Communicate Better

- Encouraging verbal communication
  - Listen attentively when your child tries to talk.
  - Show that you think what they are trying to say is important
  - Listen as you would if they were a peer
- Expanding your child's phrase length
  - Repeat what your child says and add additional words to what they say
- Production of repetitious phrases
  - Pick songs with repetitious phrases and add in gestures/ motions.
  - While singing a song, stop and see if your child can finish the repetitious phrase.

# When to Seek Help From a Professional

- When a child is unable to communicate his wants and needs to others in his/ her environment.
- When a child is unable to follow directions at an age-appropriate level.
- When a child loses language skills that he or she once had.
- When a child has a history of ear infections and/ or hearing loss.
- When a child is not developing his/her language skills as to be expected.

# Resources for You and Your Child

- Between Birth and Three Years
  - Valley Mountain Regional Center
    - Main Line: 209-473-0951
  - United Cerebral Palsy
    - Great Beginnings
      - Sue Bosch: 209-751-3108
      - Barbara Rodriguez: 209-751-3106
  - Your child's pediatrician
- Between Three and Five Years
  - Your Child's home school
  - United Cerebral Palsy
    - Great Beginnings
  - Your child's pediatrician