



Language (communication) skills are a key part of learning and engaging in positive social interactions for our young students. By ensuring that our students come to school with developmentally appropriate communication skills, we are setting them up for social, behavioral and academic success!!!

How can parents/guardians help?

- Communicate, play, sing, and read!!!
- Remember that communication is a two-way street so encourage your child by asking questions and **actively** listening to what they have to share.
- The more interactive the conversation, the more they learn!
- Talk about the day's activities.
- Enlist your child in discussions about what they would like to do the day's activities.
- As you prepare meals or engage in other routines, talk through the steps that you are completing.
- Remember to use language and vocabulary that is developmentally appropriate.
- Talk with your child about the books that you read together and about the television programs and videos you enjoy together.
- Always keep books, magazines, and other reading material where your child can reach them without help. And don't forget to visit your local library!

The America Association of Speech Language-Hearing Association has the following recommendations:



- Pay attention when your child talks to you.
- Get your child's attention before you talk.
- Praise your child when she tells you something. Show that you understand her/his words.
- Pause after speaking. This gives your child a chance to respond.
- Keep helping your child learn new words. Say a new word, and tell him/her what it means, or use it in a way that helps him/her understand. For example, you can use the word "vehicle" instead of "car." You can say, "I think I will drive the vehicle to the store. I am too tired to walk."
- Talk about where things are, using words like "first", "middle", and "last" or "right" and "left".
- Talk about opposites like "up" and "down" or "on" and "off".
- Have your child guess what you describe. Say, "We use it to sweep the floor," and have her/him find the broom. Say, "It is cold, sweet, and good for dessert. I like strawberry" so she/he can guess "ice cream."
- Work on groups of items, or categories. Find the thing that does not belong in a group. For example, "A shoe does not go with an apple and an orange because you can't eat it. It is not round. It is not a fruit."
- Help your child follow two- and three-step directions. Use words like, "Go to your room, and bring me your book."
- Ask your child to give directions. Follow his directions as he/she tells you how to build a tower of blocks.
- Play games with your child such as "house." Let her/him be the parent, and you pretend to be the child. Talk about the different rooms and furniture in the house.
- Watch movies together on TV or a tablet. Talk about what your child is watching. Have her/him guess what might happen next. Talk about the characters. Are they happy or sad? Ask her/him to tell you what happened in the story. Act out a scene together or make up a different ending.
- Use everyday tasks to learn language. For example, talk about the foods on the menu and their color, texture, and taste when in the kitchen. Talk about where to put things. Ask her/him to put the napkin on the table, in your lap, or under the spoon. Talk about who the napkin belongs to. Say, "It is my napkin." "It is Daddy's." "It is Tamara's."
- Go grocery shopping together. Talk about what you will buy, how many things you need, and what you will make. Talk about sizes, shapes, and weight.



What should I expect for my child at this stage of development?

Children who are 4 to 5 years old can follow more complex directions and enthusiastically talk about things they do. They can make up stories, listen attentively to stories, and retell stories.

At this age, children usually can understand that letters and numbers are symbols of real things and ideas, and that they can be used to tell stories and offer information. Most will know the names and gender of family members and other personal information. They often play with words and make up silly words and stories.

Their sentence structures may now include five or more words, and their vocabulary is between 1,000 and 2,000 words. Speech at this age should be completely understandable, although there may be some developmental sound errors and stuttering, particularly among boys.

What should I do if I am concerned about my child's communication skills?

If you suspect your child has a problem with hearing, language skills, or speech clarity, talk to your doctor. A hearing test may be one of the first steps to find out if your child has a hearing problem.

