

Language Activities for Home

Interacting with Others:

Work on skills related to interacting with peers. One of these skills is understanding the appropriate way to ask for something from a friend. Remind your child that he or she must first gain the peer's attention by saying their name and/or tapping them on the shoulder. Then, it is important to wait for their attention before requesting. You can help your child practice using kind words to ask, such as saying "may I" and "please". Have your child ask you or a sibling/friend for something using all these strategies. Playing "Go Fish" is a great way to practice this.

Eye Contact:

Another important social skill is making eye contact. This is especially important when making requests so that the other person knows you are talking to them. Encourage your child to make eye contact when requesting or telling you something directly.

Story/Event Retell:

Retelling a story or an event can be a great way to improve memory while supporting language development. Typically, we would like to see your child include three relevant details when retelling a story or telling you about something that happened in their day. You can incorporate this into your daily routine by having a "review time" like we do at school. Have your child recall one thing they did and tell you 3 details about it. You can do it too to give them an example.

Increasing Vocabulary:

We are always working to increase the vocabulary of our preschoolers. You can practice this by playing games like "I spy", or simply talking about what you see while you go for a walk or a ride in the car. If you're at the grocery store, give your child a list of items to look for to help you, you can talk about those vocabulary words as you go. While playing outside, give labels to the things you and your child are doing (e.g., "Look, I'm walking! You're skipping!").

"Wh-" Questions

Understanding and answering "wh-" questions are often difficult for preschoolers. This is another thing you can work on at home, just through repetition and practice. Questions with "what", "who", and "where" are the easiest so start with these. Simply ask your child a couple of these questions and help them come up with the correct answers. It's easiest if you stick with one question word per day. For example, you

might pick “who” for your activity today and ask a lot of “who” questions, like “Who did you play with today”, or “Who fixed your breakfast”. You only need to do a couple of these each time. You can also practice asking yes/no questions as a game. “Are you wearing red? Is there a snake on your head?”

Using Helper Words

Our speech is filled with small words that help convey our message, even though they might not be crucial to the meaning of our sentence. These are words like articles (a, an, the, these, etc.), conjoiners (and, but), helping verbs (is, can, will, be), and word endings like –ing, plural –s, etc. These words help make our speech grammatically correct and without them, we can sound choppy or telegraphic. If you notice that your child is leaving these words out, a simple way to work on this is to repeat back what the child said and add back in those words. So, if your child says “Doggie jumping!”, you could say “Yes! THE doggie IS jumping!” This is an easy one that you can do anywhere. You don’t need to correct your child every time he or she leaves out a word, but doing this can help provide a model of how to correctly say the things that he or she wants to convey.

Increase Sentence Length

Sometimes our goal for speech is to help the child use longer sentences when they speak. If your child is using short sentences that are only a couple words long, you can help increase their sentence length by repeating back what they say but add a word or two. For example, if your child says “Mommy eat”, you could say “Yes, Mommy eat COOKIE”. When you speak to your child, try to use sentences that are at or right above his or her level (e.g., if they are using 2-3 word sentences, you should use 3-4 word sentences). This gives them a model that they can imitate fairly easily.

Sorting Into Categories:

Practice sorting objects and pictures into categories. This is one you can work on when cleaning up your toys! Pick two categories and ask your child to sort the toys as you put them away. For example, “Put the food over here, and the cars over there”.

Attributes and Adjectives:

We talk about attributes and adjectives all the time in preschool. We use color, shape, texture, size, and many other words to describe objects. Try these at home:

- Find one or two objects and describe them using as many different attributes as possible. “Let’s see how many words we can use to describe this ball! Round, red, smooth, bouncy, fun...”
- Find as many things as you can that fit one attribute/adjective (e.g., Find as many blue things as you can, or round things, etc.)
- Have a party where everything fits into one attribute/adjective (e.g., a tea party with all round foods, a dress up party with all blue clothes, etc.)