



Language Strategies

- **Hearing** - Be mindful of changes in your child's hearing ability (e.g. less responsive, changes in volume) as this can be a sign for a possible ear infection. If your child is not hearing at their full capacity, their ability to learn new language will be reduced.
- **Attention** – Remove any distractions (e.g. turn off TV and music, move away from visually stimulating items) as children do not develop shared attention until they are 4, and get down to their level.
- **Wait** – Wait silently for approximately 5 seconds and encourage and listen to any and all attempts. Let your child start the interaction and build upon it.
- **Follow interests** – Go with your child, respond to their interests, make comments about what is happening, join in and imitate their actions. Following their interests will increase your child's motivation.
- **Sign language/Gestures** – Gestures often start before words and they can help support your child to say their first words as well as join words together (e.g. pats tummy and says "banana" = "yummy banana").
- **Model** – Children need to hear words many, many times before they begin to understand and eventually say them. When modelling language, use lots of repetition (At least 3-5 times per interaction), use short sentences to allow your child to match the words to what is happening, and slow your speech down to provide clear examples.
- **Learn as you're doing** – Narrate your day and activities to allow your child to associate words with their actions and to provide lots of opportunities.
- **Include in their routine** – Provides opportunities for consistent words and phrases.
- **Respond** – Repeat and build on what your child has said (e.g. "bird" > "the bird is flying"). Avoid responding with a question (e.g. "What is it?"), negative responses (e.g. "No, it's a ___"), or "say ___" as this does not model how we interact.
- **Expand** – Go beyond here and now by discussing feelings, past experiences, explaining why things happen or using your imagination to expand your child's language opportunities. Use unfamiliar or unusual words to spark interest.

Book Reading

Reading books with your child can significantly increase their exposure to words. (Number of words a child is exposed to by the time they are 5 = Never read to: 4,662 words, 5 books/day: 1,483,300 words).

- Incorporate books throughout the day – Use books to add more language to the activity or game, encourage your child to incorporate those words in their play.
- Develop a routine - Establish a set time where you read together.
- Have books accessible – If your child can see and reach books throughout their day, they are more likely to have an interest in them.
- Explore a variety of books – There are so many different options for books available. Let your child explore what type they like.

When reading:

- Don't focus on reading every word – Follow your child's interests, discuss what they are looking at, make the story interesting and like natural conversation.
- Be animated, use gestures and actions – The more engaging the story, the more likely that your child will remain focused and be interested in learning.
- Use props to compliment the story – Adding props can help your child relate the words and concepts to things outside the book.
- Re-read the same books regularly – Your child learns so much from hearing those words and phrases again and again.
- Pause – Stop before key words and encourage your child to fill in the gap.
- Let the child lead – Follow their pace and interests to make reading fun.

Singing

- Learn new words – The repetitive nature of songs helps your child learn new words and concepts.
- Understand language patterns – Songs also provide excellent language models for your child as they hear different phrases and sentences and start to understand the syntax of our language.
- Develop awareness of letters and sounds – Many of the classic songs include rhyme. Rhyming is a building block skill for phonological awareness which are the skills that promote literacy and are precursors to reading success.

When singing:

- Be face-to-face – Being at the same level promotes interaction and encourages imitation.
- Use gestures – Gestures help your child associate meaning to the words. Multi-sensory activities also support learning and memory.
- Pause – Provide opportunities for your child to fill in the gap.
- Repeat – The opportunity to hear the same words over and over promotes learning.

Play

- Play promotes cognitive, social-emotional and language growth.
- To develop language for meaningful communication, your child needs to have mental imagery, representational and thinking skills, all of which are developed through play.
- Play skills must develop to a certain level before the corresponding language skills are possible.

Turn-taking games - Support interactions (e.g. your turn, my turn)

- Ideas – Stacking blocks, ball games, puzzles, posting games

People play games - Support joint attention and imitation

- Ideas – Peekaboo, tickles, chasing games, up and down games, finger games, tumble play

Sensory play - Supports problem solving and social skills, and expands vocabulary options

- Ideas – Water play, sand play, ‘messy’ play, sensory trays, arts and crafts, playdough, musical instruments, dance parties

Suggestions

Themes	Books	Songs	Play
Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Brown Bear, Brown Bear● Dear Zoo● The Gruffalo● The Very Cranky Bear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Old McDonald● Five Little Ducks● Incy Wincy Spider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Muddy animals● Animal splashing● Farm play
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Hungry Caterpillar● Piranhas Don't Eat Bananas● Green Eggs and Ham	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Apples and Bananas● Hot Cross Buns● Pat-a-Cake	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tea party● Shopping game● Food making
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Who Sank the Boat● Thomas the Tank● Paw Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Wheels on the Bus● Row, Row, Row Your Boat● Toot, Toot, Chugga, Chugga	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Car run● Driving course● Diggers in sand
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Todd Parr books● Peppa Pig● Bluey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Five Finger Family● Baby Shark● Five Little Monkeys● Baa Baa Black Sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Photo albums● Doll house● Puppets
Body Parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● This is Baby● Toes, Ears & Nose● Inside your Outside	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes● If You're Happy and You Know It● Hokey Pokey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mr Potato Head● Playdough● Tickle games● Simon says