Language Modeling Tips

Stimulating speech and language in young children is extremely important for building language skills. There are many ways to stimulate speech and language development. The following techniques can be used informally during play, family trips, "wait time," or during casual conversation. The techniques are meant to provide a **model** for the child (rather than asking the child to repeat or imitate what you say). These strategies can be used anytime your child is making an attempt to speak. It is important to have children understand that speech and communication are important not only for interaction, but also to express feelings and ideas.

1.   **Self-Talk** – talk out loud about what you are seeing, hearing, doing, or feeling when your child is nearby. He or she does not have to be close to you or pay attention when you are talking out loud. Be sure to use slow, clear, simple words and phrases that the child can understand.   Example: When you're washing the dishes and your child is playing in the kitchen, you might say, "wash dishes - pick up cup - dirty cup - wash the cup - the cup is clean."

2.   **Parallel Talk** – talk out loud about what is happening to your child. Use words that describe what he or she is doing, seeing, or hearing when your child is within hearing range. Again, he or she does not need to be close to you or paying attention when you talk out loud; the child only needs to be within earshot. Be sure to use slow, clear simple words and phrases. Example: When your child is playing with a ball and then daddy comes home, you might say, "roll ball – get ball – pick up ball – daddy home – run to daddy – Max wants up."

3.   **Expansion** – as a general rule add one or two words to what your child says when you respond back. Also, your child's word order may be different than yours. Let him or her hear the right order and correct basic grammar. Don't worry about using perfect grammar yourself. Example: Change "up" (child) to "come up" (parent)

> Change "daddy" (child) to "daddy home" (parent) Change "boy eat" (child) to "the boy is eating" (parent) Change "no want" (child) to "I don't want it" (parent) Change "we play car" (child) to "Let's play with the car" (parent)

4.   **Praise** – respond quickly to your child's speech attempts and verbal requests by your verbal and/or non-verbal responses. Non-verbal praise may include a smile, a hug, a pat on the back, eye contact, clapping your hands etc. Verbal praise may include reflecting back to what your child said or saying how much you like their talking.

Example: When you are playing with your child and he says "ba" for ball the first time, you might open your eyes wide and smile "ball – ball rolls – I like your talking."

Example: When your child says "car" and points to his toy car on the table because he wants to play with it, you might clap your hands and say "car – you want car." Then as you hand the toy car, you might also add "take car."

For more information and to learn about activities to stimulate speech and language development in children, please visit the following websites:

http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/Parent-Stim-Activities.htm

http://www.talkingchild.com/talkingtip.htm

Center for Speech and Language Pathologist