

Ways to Fit Language Learning into Your Daily Life

One of the best things we can do with our children is help them learn to communicate. You can create talking moments with your children during routines that are part of your everyday life.



Teach your child to communicate!

THE TABLE – Mealtimes are natural opportunities for conversation. You are sitting face to face and looking at each other, which is ideal for communication. You can name the food items (e.g., apples), describe the food (e.g., hot, crunchy), and talk about actions that happen (e.g., pouring the milk). You can chat about things that will happen or that have happened. Talking about all of these things will help increase the words that your child knows (i.e., their vocabulary).

THE CAR – When you are driving you have to sit and slow down. This gives us the time to talk with our children and wait for a response. Slowing down and waiting are strategies that can help with language learning. Driving also provides opportunities to learn new words: you can talk about the objects you see (e.g., garbage truck, hospital, school, dog, snow), the places you are going (e.g., preschool), and the people you are going to see (e.g., Grandma).

WAITING ROOMS – You are waiting anyway, so why not talk? Talk about what is happening in the waiting room (e.g., “we are waiting for our turn”, “that boy is sitting and waiting, too”). Talk about what is going to happen in the appointment (e.g., “the dentist is going to look in your mouth”).

THE BATH – Bath time creates face to face interaction. At bath time, you can talk about body parts (e.g., feet, toes) and use action words (e.g., wash, rinse, splash, pour).

CHANGE TIME/GETTING DRESSED – Talking is a great way to keep your little one still when you are changing them. It is a time to use clothing words (e.g., shirt on, pants on). You can also use sequencing terms to help your child learn words about the order of events; for example, “first we put your diaper on, then your shirt, your pants go on last”). It is a time to offer choices (e.g., “red shirt or blue shirt”). Offering choices helps with language growth as you are providing an example of the words you would like your child to copy.

THE GROCERY STORE – The store provides many chances to increase your child’s words. You can talk about the different food items or describe their features (e.g., red apple or green apple), you can talk about number concepts (e.g., one cabbage, a few pears). You can also work on social skills, like greeting the cashier (e.g., “hi, bye”).

BED TIME – The end of the day is a wonderful time to sit and talk with your child. It is also a good time to read to your child. Books expose children to new words and provide repetition which is key for learning language.

The main thing to remember is to take the time to talk to your children during your daily activities! Children need someone to talk with them in order to learn language.