



## Helping children with language

You can help children learn words and sentences in different ways. You can model words in your own talking, share books and play together, and praise children for trying new words.



### Model

**Model** the way words and sentences are used in your own talking.

You: *Let's put apples in the basket.*

Child: Apples in.

You: *The apples are in the basket.*

It's OK if your child doesn't say the words after you.



### Recasting

**Rephrase** what your child says to include all the words in the right order, or to say something in a different way.

Child: Dog gone!

You: *The dog has gone!*

*Where has the dog gone?*



### Turn taking

**Take turns** when you are talking and playing together.

Pause and wait for your child to take a turn using words or gestures.

You: That puzzle piece doesn't go there! It won't fit! I'll try it here.  
*(Pause and look expectantly at the child)*

Child: It won't fit!



### Reduction

**Shorten your sentences** so that they are the same length or a bit longer than your child's sentences.

Child: Kick the ball.

You: *Bounce the ball.* (same length as the child's sentence)

*I'll bounce the ball very high.* (sentence is a bit longer)



### Expansion

**Add on** a word or phrase to what your child has said.

Child: Bird.

You: *A bird in the tree!*

*A little bird.*

Adding on helps children hear how the sentence can be a bit longer.



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The more often children hear different words and sentences in their day, the more likely they will begin to understand them and use them in their own talking.



### Parallel Talk

**Use words to describe what you and your child are doing.**

Child: *(stacking blocks)*

You: *You're making a tower.  
You put a block on the top.*

Putting words with daily activities helps the words make sense to children.



### Binary choice

**Give choices** when you are offering something to your child.

You: Do you want the *red cup*, or the *green cup*?  
Do you want to go on the *swing* or the *slide*?

Choices help children get their message across more clearly.



### Repetition

**Repeat key words often** when you are playing and in daily routines.

You: Put your socks *on* first. Now one shoe *on*, and two shoes *on*!  
Hats *on*, and we're ready to go!

Repeating gives children lots of chances to hear important words.



### Praise

**Praise** your child for trying new words and sentences.

You: Great describing words.  
I heard all of your words in that sentence, well done!  
I like how you said...  
Good trying!



### Practice

Children benefit from opportunities to hear and practice talking as part of their day. Use words and sentences when you are:

**Playing together,**  
**Sharing books,** and  
**At home** (e.g., meals) and **out and about** (e.g., at the park).