

In the Meantime ...

To help your child talk....

- Play with your child. Get down to your child's level and be **face-to-face**.
- Watch to see what your child is interested in and **imitate** their sounds and actions.
- Reduce questions (i.e., What is this?), which increases the pressure on your child and increase the **commenting** that you do, which decreases pressure to talk. That is, instead of saying "What's that?" when you point to a dog, just label 'dog'. This will increase the words your child is hearing and increase their opportunities to model your language.
- Comment on what you and your child are doing. **Add language** to your play (i.e., Go car. Sticky fingers- wash wash wash.)
- Build language into daily routines and activities. **Repeat, repeat, repeat!!!** The repetition of these words within their natural contexts will help your child's understanding of the words and increase the likelihood that they will repeat them. (i.e., help (when they need help); more (during meal times); go (to start a fun game); Shirt on. Shoes on. Pants on. (during dressing routine).
- Use simple words and short phrases. Pause and wait to see if your child responds.
- **Increase choice questions** you ask of your child (e.g. "Do you want ____ or ____?") while holding up the objects indicated. This way you are modeling vocabulary for your child to imitate, while helping them understand the names of items. When we ask yes/no questions (i.e., Do you want milk?) we limit the responses from our child to 'yes' or 'no'. When we ask a choice question (i.e., Do you want water or milk?) we increase the likelihood that they will attempt to say a word or point to what they want. If they point to what they want- model the word for them again.
- Enjoy **book sharing** with your child. Remember you don't always need to read all of the words in the book. Instead, follow your child's lead and talk about the pictures they are interested in. Encourage your child to explore books with textures and flaps. This gives you a chance to label descriptive words (i.e., soft, sticky, rough) and talk about action words (i.e., open, close).
- **Sing songs** with your child. Add actions so your child can join in. Once your child is familiar with the song, pause and wait at an exciting part and allow your child a chance to fill in an action, sound or word. For example, in the "Zoom Zoom Zoom" song, count down "5, 4, 3, 2, 1" and then pause and wait before you say 'blast off' and lift your child up.
- Make up your own songs about people and things familiar to you and your child.
 - This is the way we... wash the car, buy the groceries, feed the dog, etc.
 - The wheels on our van go round and round etc.

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Once you start using some of these tips, you may start to hear more sounds and words from your child! Start a list of what your child is saying and bring it with you to the assessment.

You may also wish to borrow the Hanen Parent Guidebook called “It Takes Two to Talk”. This book is easy to read with lots of pictures and has easy to use strategies to encourage communication in young children. We have several copies available in our Resource Centres.

As well, for more tips you may find the following websites helpful:

<https://youtu.be/KAFcJVJHLCU> Why Interaction Matters – Part 1 - Here you will find a brief video on why it so important to talk to your child right from the start!

https://youtu.be/QJAgWdYM_og Why Interaction Matters – Part 2 – This is a brief video that shows what high quality interactions with your child look like and how important this is to your child’s speech and language development.

<http://www.bpl.bc.ca/kids/newcomer-families/your-first-language> Here you will find information on the importance of speaking your home language with your child. This information is available in several languages.

The Power of Play: Creating Opportunities for Language Development (for Parents of Preschoolers ages 2 ½ to 4). This website provides ideas of how to add language to age appropriate toys for your child.

<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/talk-box-toy-cards.pdf>

Speech and Language Developmental Milestones by Age:

<https://www.kidsability.ca/speech-language>

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/earlychildhood/speechlanguage/index.aspx>