

**COMMUNICATION**

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**Book**  
Number 2



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

## **PARENT HELPER...The Series**

The Maryland State Department of Education publishes a series of PARENT HELPER handbooks covering a variety of skill development areas.

- BOOK 1, Parent Helper: **Overview**
- BOOK 2, Parent Helper: **Communication**
- BOOK 3, Parent Helper: **Cognition**
- BOOK 4, Parent Helper: **Socialization**
- BOOK 5, Parent Helper: **Motor Development**

For a single handbook or for the entire PARENT HELPER series, contact the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Early Childhood Intervention and Education Branch, 200 W. Baltimore Street, 9th floor, Baltimore, MD 21201; 410-767-0261 Voice; 1-800-535-0182 Toll Free; 410-333-8165 Fax.

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## **Introduction**

### **PARENT HELPER: Communication**

Parents are the primary teachers of their children in the early years of life. The PARENT HELPER: **COMMUNICATION** handbook is one in a series of publications written specially for parents.

This handbook presents information concerning the communication process, developmental sequences of communicative behaviors and activities that can help create an atmosphere or climate for meaningful communication between parent and child.

Because no two children are exactly alike, and since some children may face special challenges, this PARENT HELPER handbook simply offers broad and general guidelines. Each child's developmental level will influence how fast, how much, and how well he processes information. Working together, parents, educators and other professionals can share knowledge, creativity, and commitment for making the most of each young child's development.

Many suggestions found in this handbook have come from parents, others have been successfully used by teachers and other early care and education providers. It is hoped that the suggested activities will assist you in creating a secure, loving environment which will encourage your child's language development.



## **From Here to There...**

### **Development of Communication**

Communication is a complex process—an exchange of words, ideas and feelings involving the ability to receive and send messages through a systematic language code.

#### **Receptive Language:**

##### **Receiving and Understanding**

The ability to receive messages and understand language is part of the communication process known as receptive language. Prerequisites for receptive language development include:

- \* an early awareness of sound
- \* an ability to focus on sound
- \* an ability to focus on human voice
- \* an ability to remember spoken words
- \* an ability to understand the meaning of spoken words

#### **Expressive Language:**

##### **Sending and Expressing**

Although speech is an important form of communication, it is not the only form. The actual ability to send a message and express language is part of the communication process known as expressive language. Speech is one form. Eye contact is another.

Children convey their thoughts, needs and feelings through various combinations of body movements, actions and gestures; tone, voice volume and speech; and facial expressions.

#### **The Development of Communication**

Communication follows a sequence of development beginning with the very first interactions between parents and newborns. These early interactions include the infant's response to a parent's hand, voice, skin, and face as they are touched, rubbed, spoken to and held. Communication can actually provide an increasingly strong bond of trust and security between a parent and child.

For some children, communication skills development may be altered or interrupted by hearing loss or oral motor dysfunctions. Early detection of such disabilities or delays can be critical to your child's ability to communicate effectively as he grows.

If you notice that your child does not consistently demonstrate an awareness of sound, perhaps as described in the following **Developmental Milestones** chart, talk to your child's health care provider.

### **When Communication Development is Interrupted by Hearing Loss**

Early detection of hearing loss can be critical to your child's ability to communicate effectively. A delay in the development of expressive language may be observable if your baby stops vocalizing and babbling because there is no reinforcement from hearing his own voice. If you notice that your baby does not vocalize or babble, he may benefit from hearing or audiological testing. Medical and education professionals who care for your child can assist you in determining the nature of testing needed and with observing your child's communication development.

### **When Communication Development is Altered by Oral-Motor Dysfunctions**

Early detection of oral-motor problems is also critical to your child's ability to communicate effectively. If your child has difficulty closing her lips, moving her tongue to chew food, swallowing and coordinating jaw-lip-tongue movements that are necessary for speech, then sound, imitation, babbling and jargonizing may not emerge at the expected age level.

Your partnership with professionals working with your child can be valuable for learning methods of jaw control and feeding techniques that will enable your child to develop better control of mouth movement for the imitation of sounds and words.

### **Alternative Methods of Communication**

Parents must be aware that some children never develop the oral-motor control necessary for speaking clearly. Parents and professionals are continuously exploring various techniques and devices that assist children in their desire to communicate when speech is not a realistic expectation. Supplementary systems, such as communication boards, manual sign language, electronic hearing and speaking devices, all assist children to communicate their needs, feelings and ideas.

## **Developmental Milestones**





The following **Developmental Milestones** offer a general sequence and age range for skill development in young children. You may find this information helpful in gauging your child's development and in planning learning activities to match your child's age and developmental level.

As you observe your child's development, keep in mind that no two children are exactly alike. Your child may develop at a different pace than what is suggested here. If at any time, however, you become concerned about your child's development, contact your health care provider.

# Developmental Milestones - COMMUNICATION

	Receptive Language	Expressive Language	
<b>0 to 3 Months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Startles in response to loud noise</li> <li>Smiles in response to familiar voice</li> <li>Quiets to a familiar voice</li> <li>Looks directly at the speaker's face</li> <li>Begins to turn head and eyes toward sound</li> <li>Anticipates sound associated with feeding</li> <li>Maintains brief eye contact during feeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes soft, throaty sounds</li> <li>Cries differently to express hunger, irritation, pain</li> <li>Expresses pleasure by cooing, squealing, gurgling</li> <li>Produces consonant sounds "g," "k" and "h"</li> <li>Produces vowel sounds "eh," "ah" and "uh"</li> <li>Enjoys taking turns vocalizing with parents</li> <li>Smiles in response to own image in mirror</li> </ul>	
<b>3 to 6 Months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows fear of angry voice</li> <li>Smiles and laughs at pleasant-sounding speech</li> <li>Turns head toward sound of a human voice</li> <li>Responds to own name</li> <li>Stops crying when talked to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babbles by repeating a series of same sounds</li> <li>Laughs during play</li> <li>Makes clicking sounds with tongue</li> <li>Blows 'bubbles' through closed lips or tongue</li> <li>Vocalizes with four or more different consonant-vowel syllables, for example "na" and "goo"</li> <li>Begins to imitate sounds</li> <li>Makes protest sounds when desired objects are removed</li> <li>Smiles and waves arms to continue a social exchange</li> </ul>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<b>6 to 9 Months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks for family members when asked "Where's Mommy?" "Where's Daddy?"</li> <li>Looks at common objects when they are named</li> <li>Responds to own name more consistently by stopping activity</li> <li>Attends somewhat to music</li> <li>Responds with gestures to such terms as "up" and "bye-bye"</li> <li>Appears to listen to conversations between others by looking at each speaker</li> <li>Pauses momentarily in response to "no"</li> <li>Looks at pictures as someone talks about them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imitates familiar gesture like shaking a toy</li> <li>Uses two-syllable babbling, for example "mama," "dada" and "gaga"</li> <li>Vocalizes to call attention to self</li> <li>Babbles using singing-like tones, especially to music</li> <li>Plays speech-gesture games like "pat-a-cake" and "peek-a-boo"</li> <li>Uses gesture language such as shaking head "no"</li> <li>Often imitates sounds and the number of syllables used by others</li> </ul>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<b>9 to 12 Months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands simple requests such as "give me," "open your mouth" and "give me a kiss"</li> <li>Understands simple, often heard words such as "hot" and "big"</li> <li>Responds to simple questions with searching movements, for example, "Where's your shoe?" "Where's the ball?"</li> <li>Interested in sounds outside immediate situation</li> <li>Responds to music with body movements in rhythmic time to the music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays exchange games like handing objects back and forth to another person</li> <li>Initiates games of "pat-a-cake" and peek-a-boo"</li> <li>Converses with people, toys and self using jargon (strings of consonant-vowel combinations with changes in tone and pitch of voice)</li> <li>Uses first true word with meaning</li> <li>Attempts to imitate new words</li> <li>Uses exclamations like "huh"</li> <li>Uses referential words or sounds such as "woo-woo" for dog</li> </ul>	

0 to 12 months

		<b>12</b>		
		<b>to</b>		
		<b>36</b>		
		<b>Months</b>		
<b>12 to 18 Months</b>	<b>Receptive Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands simple one-step commands</li> <li>• Recognizes names of large body parts</li> <li>• Displays an understanding of named objects by bringing them from another place upon request</li> <li>• Identifies two or more familiar objects from a group of three or four by touching or pointing</li> <li>• Enjoys listening to rhymes and jingles</li> <li>• Begins to look more selectively at pictures to recognize them when named</li> </ul>	 	<b>Expressive Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts to get objects by pointing and vocalizing</li> <li>• Uses from three to 20 single words meaningfully</li> <li>• Omits final sounds and words frequently</li> <li>• Uses multi-syllable words, such as “bottle”</li> <li>• Answers questions, such as “What’s this?”</li> <li>• Uses two-word combinations as single words, for instance “gimme” or “c’mere”</li> <li>• Imitates many new words</li> <li>• Communicates primarily through true words and gestures</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands simple “yes/no” questions</li> <li>• Understands differences in personal pronouns like “me” and “you”</li> <li>• Follows a series of two to three simple, related commands with the same object</li> <li>• Displays understanding of spatial concepts “in” and “on” by moving self and objects in a space</li> <li>• Recognizes body parts and clothing articles in large pictures</li> <li>• Recognizes body parts and clothing articles in large pictures</li> </ul>	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replaces jargon with meaningful words</li> <li>• Refers to self by name</li> <li>• Uses “no” frequently</li> <li>• Uses “my” to declare ownership</li> <li>• Begins combining words to form two word phrases, for instance “go bye-bye” or “Mommy shoe”</li> <li>• Imitates animal sounds and other environmental sounds in play</li> <li>• Asks questions by raising pitch of voice at end of word or phrase</li> </ul>	
<b>24 to 36 Months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands actions in pictures</li> <li>• Recognizes names of smaller body parts</li> <li>• Understands functions of objects, for instance understands that cups are for drinking and combs are for combing hair</li> <li>• Understands size concepts “big” and “little”</li> <li>• Understands quantity concepts “one,” “more” and “all”</li> <li>• Understands spatial concepts “in,” “on” and “under”</li> <li>• Becomes aware of a sequence and organization for daily routines like mealtime, bath time and bedtime</li> <li>• Understands “Who?” “What?” “When?” and “Where?” question forms</li> <li>• Likes to listen to short stories</li> <li>• Understands gender (male/female)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combines words to express: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>possession - “my coat”</li> <li>recurrence - “more juice”</li> <li>action - “go outside”</li> <li>location - “want up”</li> <li>negation - “no eat”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Usually uses two, three and four-word combinations</li> <li>• Asks for help with personal needs like toileting and washing hands</li> <li>• Names and talks with own drawing</li> <li>• Can say first and last name when asked</li> <li>• Can repeat two numbers in sequence</li> <li>• Talks about an event that has just taken place</li> <li>• Uses commands like “go get it”</li> <li>• Uses “here” and “there” as adverbs</li> <li>• Begins using “is” verb form</li> <li>• Uses pronouns “I,” “me,” “mine” and “you”</li> <li>• Speech is understood by others up to 70 to 80 percent of the time</li> </ul>	



# Developmental Milestones - COMMUNICATION

## Receptive Language

- Understands concepts “hard/soft” and “rough/smooth”
- Understands spatial concepts “front/back”
- Understands question forms like:
  - “What do you do when you are hungry?”
  - “What do you do when you are sleepy?”
  - “What do you do when you are cold?”
- Follows two-step directions involving two different actions



36



to



60



Months



## Expressive Language

- Asks “Who?” “What?” “Where?” “Why?” questions
- Uses four to five word sentences most of the time
- Engages in detailed conversations
- Uses language in imaginative play
- Imitates whispering
- Relates two events in correct sequential order
- Verbally completes sentences relating opposites, for instance can complete the sentence “Daddy is a man” and “Mommy is a \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Uses verb forms like “is,” “am” and “are”
- Uses contracted forms like “won’t” and “can’t”
- Uses regular past tense verb forms such as “walked”
- Uses regular plural forms such as “blocks”
- Uses pronouns such as “myself” for emphasis
- Uses possessives like “Mommy’s car”
- Uses prepositions like “in,” “on” and “under”
- Uses “and” as a connective word
- Begins using “because” as an explanation

36 to 48 Months

48 to 60 Months

60+ Months

- Follows series of three unrelated commands
- Identifies two to three primary colors
- Understands concepts “heavy/light,” “loud/soft” and “day/night”
- Understands directional concepts “above/below” and “top/bottom”

- Identifies all primary colors
- Understands concepts “same/different”
- Understands concepts “first/middle/last”
- Understands spatial concepts “left/right”
- Understands more time-related concepts like “before/after” and yesterday/tomorrow
- Understands question form “What happens if...?”
- Understands question forms “How often?” and “How long?”

- Combines four to eight words in one sentence
- Describes objects according to size, shape and color
- Enjoys asking for the meaning of new words
- Uses “could” and “would” verb forms
- Uses future tense verb forms like “will”
- Uses “no” and “not” appropriately
- Uses contracted negatives like “can’t” and “don’t”
- Uses pronouns like “he,” “she” and “they”
- Uses possessive pronouns like “his,” “her” and “our”
- Uses “if” and “so” in forming complex sentences
- Uses consonant sounds consistently and accurately, although has not mastered them in all words

- Retells a brief story
- Asks meaning of abstract words
- Can tell home address
- Talks about events in the future using “will”
- Uses pronouns “himself” and “herself”
- Compares objects using “-er” and “-est” endings, for instance “bigger” and “biggest”
- May distort or substitute for speech sounds like /s/, /z/, /r/ and /th/ and consonant blends like /pl/, /tr/ and /sp/

36 through 60 months

## **The Discovery Process...**

### **How Children Learn**

#### **Touching. Tasting. Smelling. Hearing. Seeing.**

Children experience the world through their senses. They smell sweet vanilla, taste salty crackers, touch soft kittens, hear loud bangs, and see brightly colored ribbons. Your child learns by listening to sounds made by people and things, by looking at shapes, colors, and patterns, and by exploring with touch, taste, and smell.

#### **Paying Attention.**

In order to learn, children have to select important aspects on which to focus. Attention span—or how long a child can concentrate—usually increases with maturity and is influenced by how interesting an experience is for your child.

#### **Attaching Meaning to Words.**

For effective communication, young children use their sense of hearing and their ability to listen; their sense of sight and their ability to look; their sense of touch and their ability to feel. Your young child especially needs to learn that spoken words are merely symbols which represent what is heard, seen and felt. Words have meaning which your child must learn to understand.

#### **Remembering Information.**

Memory is important for young children to store the information they learn about the world through their senses. This ability to remember information is important in both the understanding and expression of language.

#### **Imitating Others.**

Young children observe the actions of others. Imitating sounds, actions and words is important to your child's development of new skills and spontaneous language expression.

#### **Combining Facial Expressions, Gestures and Words.**

Just as young children learn about the world through a combination of senses, they also communicate and interact with the world through a combination of facial expressions, body movements, tones of voice and words. This combination or language system becomes each child's personal way of expressing an emotion or idea.



## You Can Help Your Child Learn

**Try the following to help your child develop communication skills.**

### **Create a climate for communication.**

Your child needs feelings of security and predictability. Provide structure, routine and limits in your child's life. Communicate an acceptance of your child by using words of encouragement. Create a positive atmosphere that responds to your child's actions and needs, and encourages her to explore and learn. Talk with instead of at your child.

### **Get your child's attention.**

Before giving directions or explanations to your child, make certain that he is looking at you and is ready to receive your message. Use simple words with special emphasis. Call his name or say "listen," "look" or "ready."

### **Help your child understand language.**

Try communicating at your child's eye level and use language that is appropriate for her developmental level. Speak clearly using short, simple sentences. Be specific using names and labels for objects. Repeat! Repeat! Repeat! Use actions or gestures as cues to understanding if your child does not attach meaning to words. If your child becomes frustrated, build in success by physically guiding her step-by-step through the desired behavior.

### **Make statements that relate to situations.**

Talk about the "here and now." Talk about the obvious—what you and your child are doing, hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting. Children tend to listen more to language that is obvious, meaningful and interesting.

### **Give your child time to respond.**

Young children need time to understand, recall information and express their thoughts.

Some children require more time than others. Waiting for a response can be frustrating for eager adults. Your patience may assist your child in becoming comfortable with self expression.

### **Listen to your child's message.**

Maintain eye contact as your child communicates with you. Let your face and voice convey your interest. Listen to your child's tone of voice. Watch his face, body and hand movements. All of these behaviors combine to communicate a message.

### **Model and expand your child's language.**

When your child is able to express thoughts with spoken words, repeat the words in a phrase or short sentence to expand the response. To demonstrate a new idea and new language structure, model new combinations of words or sentences that relate to what your child has already said.

### **Reward your child's attempts to communicate.**

Your child's desire to communicate may depend in part upon the kind of feedback she receives from you. Your smiles, hugs and words of genuine praise can encourage your child to interact and can teach her the rewards of communication.

### **Become a good observer of your child's ability to communicate.**

Observe how your child communicates his needs and interacts with others. Describe the situations or activities which seem to stimulate your child's communication. Write down words or sentences you have heard your child use in exactly the same way he used it. Use your observations to become more aware of your child's communication development and to help him acquire new skills.



## Make Home Your Child's First Learning Environment

Since your child's first learning environment is the home, you will want to make it a caring and stimulating place that is responsive to your child's needs and interests.

The following ideas and activities are suggestions which may be helpful in creating a responsive learning environment. Use your child's developmental level rather than her chronological age to guide your activity choices. Additionally, do not think that you must introduce all of the activities at one time in the sequence listed within each grouping. Personalize these suggestions in ways that make sense for your child and family.

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### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES When Your Child is Learning to Understand Language...

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#### **Provide opportunities for your child to become aware of sound.**

1. Use different brightly colored sound makers of various (high and low) tones. Rattles, bells, squeaky toys are appropriate. Hold the sound-makers close to your baby at ear level.
2. Talk to your baby using facial expressions, tones and words while you hold, bathe and feed her.

#### **Observe your child's responses to sound and voice.**

3. Does your child look toward you as you talk to him during feeding or bath times?
4. Does he search for you with eye or head movement as she hears your voice?
5. Does she smile and watch your face as you walk and sing while holding or rocking him?
6. Does she turn her head or move her eyes when sound makers are presented to her at ear level?

#### **Allow your child to experience new sounds.**

7. Clap your child's hands together.
8. Place your child on his stomach allowing him to scratch the rug with his fingers.
9. Lightly bang pots and pans with spoons.

#### **Help your child understand the meaning of words.**

10. Say "come up" with your arms lifted upward after changing your child's diaper or after feeding or napping. Tap her arms lifting them upward so that she learns now to respond. Pick your child up quickly to reward her.
11. Say "wave bye-bye" as you move your child's arms when someone is leaving. Wave at toys which are your child's favorites as you are putting them away. Any arm, wrist or finger movement should be praised. Many children will begin by waving to themselves as they see others wave to them. Eventually, your child will respond to your request automatically without your physical assistance as a cue.

**Reminder: Always choose activities that are appropriate for your child's level of development.**

**Provide opportunities to explore books and pictures.**

12. Choose books that have the following characteristics:
  - bright colors
  - one subject per page
  - easy-to-turn pages
  - squeaky animal sounds
  - textures which your child can rub, pull and touch
  - real photographs of objects and people, including family members
13. Position your child in your lap so that your face and the book can be seen at the same time. Position yourself in front of your child's high chair and read aloud while he is seated in the high chair.
14. Use short, simple sentences to describe pictures and allow your child to pat or touch the picture. For instance, you may say, "Look at the ball. Pretty ball. You have a ball."

**Help your child become aware of his body and his senses.**

15. Begin with body parts that are easily seen and used most often.
16. Name the body part with emphasis when your child is using that part in some way during play.
17. Label body parts as you are feeding your child.
18. Sing simple songs about body parts.
19. Hide parts of your child's body under a blanket or under sand at the beach.



20. Use baby dolls that have realistic, distinct features during play:
  - “Let's brush the baby's *hair*.”
  - “Let's brush the baby's *teeth*.”
  - “Let's clap the baby's *hands*.”
  - “Let's powder the baby's *tummy*.”
  - “Let's put a bandage on the baby's *finger*.”

**Help your child understand names of familiar objects.**

21. Ask for “*shoe*” and “*sock*” while dressing your child. Ask for “*spoon*” and “*cup*” after eating. Use objects that are meaningful to the situation. As soon as your child looks at the correct object, give praise immediately. When your child makes an incorrect choice, remove the object from her hand and name the object. Ask for the object again and guide your child's hand toward it. Build in success. Help her get it right!

**Enrich your child's understanding of language by using action words and descriptive words.**

22. Talk about what you are doing, repeating the action word several times. “Daddy is brushing your hair. Brushing. Brushing. Brushing!”
23. Read books to your child. Imitate actions illustrated in the book. Ask your child to imitate. For example, pretend to eat the cookies and drink the milk.
24. Use words to describe familiar objects in daily routine.
  - “Don't touch! The stove is hot!”
  - When laughing together say, “That's funny.”
  - “Daddy's shoes are too big for you.”

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## MORE SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

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### Provide opportunities for your child to explore objects according to how they are used.

25. Explain why you do certain things.
- At bath time say, *“Your hands are so dirty. Let’s wash them.”*
  - At meal time say, *“You must be hungry. Let’s eat some cereal.”*
  - When dressing say, *“Oob, it’s cold! Let’s put your coat on.”*
  - When putting together a puzzle say, *“The boy in the puzzle has to see where he’s going. Where are his eyes?”*

### Help your child develop listening, attending and memory skills.

26. Make up stories about pictures you and your child see in magazines.
27. Read picture books with your child. Classic examples of children’s picture books include:
- The Three Bears,
  - Three Little Pigs
  - Sesame Street
28. Listen to records that tell a story. Recordings that use clear, distinct speech and sound effects may help keep your child’s attention.
29. Cut out three or four pictures of animals, people and objects which could illustrate a short story. Place them on the floor in front of your child. Help her learn the sequence of the story by the way the pictures are ordered.
30. Make story telling time your family’s together time with as few distractions as possible.

### Encourage your child to use his voice to make sounds.

31. Make quiet “cooing” sounds at your child while he’s in his crib.
32. Place your child’s hands gently on your face as you speak.
33. Sing while holding or rocking your child. Look at his face and wait for him to vocalize.

### Help your child discover her voice and her lip, tongue and jaw movements.

34. Respond with pleasure to your child’s sounds by smiling and imitating her sounds. Encourage her to imitate your babbling by making the sounds you have heard her make during play.
35. Try not to interrupt your child’s string of babbling sounds. She will probably stop to listen to you if you interrupt her.

### Help your child enjoy his social interaction with you.

36. Play “peek-a-boo!” Respond with excitement as your child’s head reappears from under his shirt while you are dressing him.
37. Use a very soft diaper to cover your child’s face while playing “peek-a-boo.” Help him remove the cloth as you say: “Where is (your child’s name)?” As he removes the cloth, say: “There’s (your child’s name).” Laugh and smile so that your child is not frightened by the activity. You can even play this game with a dry or damp washcloth during bath time.
38. Play “peek-a-boo” by covering your eyes with your hands. Place your child’s hands over his hands with your hands on top.

**Help your child learn to imitate gestures.**

- 39. Observe your child's behavior with toys, such as banging or shaking. Imitate this behavior first and observe any attempt to imitate you. Take your child's hand and help her imitate you.
- 40. Choose new gestures which are similar to gestures your child already knows. If she can pat the table with her hands, model that behavior on the floor as you say: "Sit down right here."

**Shape your child's sounds into single words.**

- 41. As your child begins using single words, remember that for your child, one particular word may convey an entire idea. For example: "Mama" may mean "I want Mama," "There's Mama," or "Come here Mama." Listen and respond appropriately. Expand the utterance by saying: "Mama's coming," "You see Mama?" or "Mama's right here."
- 42. To encourage labeling or naming an object, use the name of that object as a model for your child to imitate. For example: "There's your ball! What is that?" or "I see a cat. What do you see?"

**Respond to ALL forms of communication that your child uses.**

- 43. Children use sounds and words to attract our attention. They use gestures to add emphasis to their messages. Your response to both helps him understand the power of communication.

- 44. Bend down to your child's level and establish eye contact with him. Accept attempts at words although they may not sound exactly like the real word. Say the word correctly for your child to hear.

**Allow your child to imitate a variety of sounds and noises.**

- 45. Respond to environmental sounds as they occur naturally. Imitate the sounds of trucks, cars, airplanes and fire trucks. Imitate the sounds of wind on a windy day.
- 46. Create play situations with toys. Pour from a play pitcher, making the sound "ch, ch." Drink from a cup, making lip-smacking sounds or "mmm-mmm-mmm."

**Model two-word phrases for your child to imitate.**

- 47. When your child has a vocabulary of 20 to 30 words, she may begin to combine words to make phrases. Take advantage of opportunities to model these combinations in your daily routine. Use combinations of single words which your child already uses. Work from the familiar to the less familiar. Examples include:

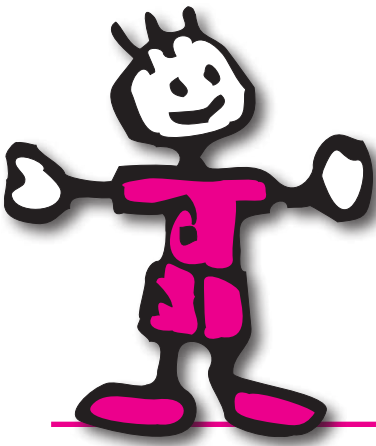
- "big boy"
- "more juice"
- "my coat"
- "go out"
- "no milk"

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**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Developmental areas overlap. So a delay or impairment in development of large or fine motor skills may influence the rate and the means by which your child learns other developmental skills. Work with your child's early care and education providers to plan for communication learning experiences.

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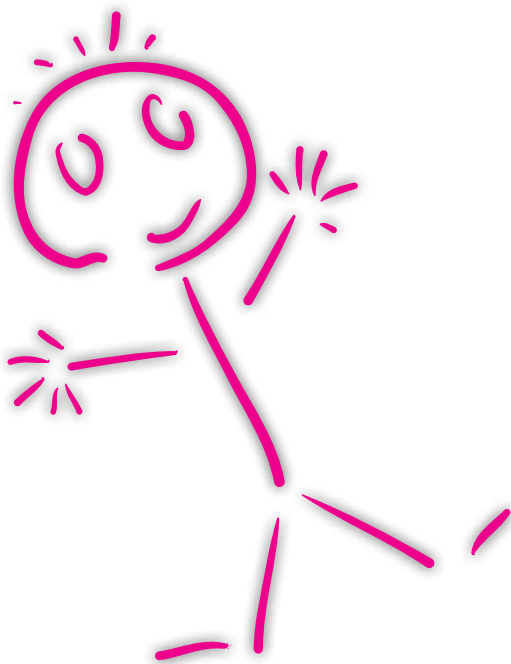
**Encourage your child's ability to communicate with gestures.** Your child may develop a number of gestures early in life, including:

- waving “bye-bye”
- shaking head “no”
- turning hands over to indicate “all gone”
- moving hands toward body to indicate “come”

**Reduce the frustration of learning to communicate.**

48. Children who have difficulty coordinating lip, tongue and jaw movements may benefit from methods of communication which are less stressful. If receptive language skills include an ability to follow simple directions and identify common objects by touching, pointing or looking in the appropriate direction, an object board can be made for your child to indicate his needs.

Real objects can be attached to cardboard or plywood to enable your child to look or reach toward a desired toy, eating utensil or article of clothing. To meet the specific needs of your child, consult with professionals regarding the appropriate objects, the number of objects, arrangement of objects on the board, position of the board for each use, and developmental level of your child.



**Expand your child's ability to form sentences of three to four words.**

49. Read a picture story using short sentences. Repeat the story over a period of several days until your child begins to tell the story in the same way when seeing the pictures.
50. Ask questions about an activity which your child has just completed. Provide as much information as needed for your child to remember. For example, asking the question “What did you eat at the party?” provides more structure than a vague question like, “What did you do at the party? After talking about the main event, probe for more details which may encourage longer sentences. For example, “Tell me about Barbara’s new doll house.”
51. Make up imaginary telephone conversations about some event.

**Stimulate use of verb and pronoun forms when your child expresses her thoughts consistently at the sentence level.**

52. Choose simple nursery rhymes that can be demonstrated through pictures and objects. Choose rhymes that emphasize certain verb forms or pronoun forms. For example, “Where is Thumbkin?” emphasizes use of the verb “is” in short sentences. “I’m a Little Teapot” emphasizes use of pronoun forms “I” and “me.”



## Around the House: Sample Teaching Activities for Children with Disabilities

### Sample Teaching Activity #1: CHRISTINA MAKES COOKIES

**Description:** Christina is a three-year-old girl with a repaired cleft lip and palate. She has had recurring ear infections and has been hospitalized three times for surgical repairs of her palate and placement of tubes in both ears to help control middle ear fluid problems. Christina communicates with two-word phrases and does not yet understand concepts of size, number or function.

**Activity:** Christina's mother enjoys baking cookies. She has decided that Christina is old enough to help. She takes advantage of the opportunities to help Christina follow directions, learn new action words and learn to sequence and organize an activity. Christina's mom says:

"We're going to make cookies. First, let's wash our hands. We need...

- ...a big bowl*
- ...two big spoons*
- ...one egg,*
- ...and the cookie mix"*

*"Let's pour the cookie mix in the bowl.*

*Now, let's crack the egg.*

*Now, let's stir' round and 'round. Stir! Stir!"*

Christina's mother also takes advantage of opportunities to encourage expressive language development using new words and two-three word sentences.

*"Let's make this cookie for Daddy.*

*Whose cookie is it?*

*Right. It's Daddy's cookie."*

Christina's mother makes a small book with stick-figure drawings of Christina making cookies. Christina can tell Dad about her experience by talking about the pictures.



## Around the House: Sample Teaching Activities for Children with Disabilities

### Sample Teaching Activity #2: DAVID BLOWS BUBBLES

**Description:** David is a two-year-old child who is not yet talking. He rarely looks at people in his social interactions with them. David's attention span is described as "very short" by his parents. He shows little interest in imitating actions or speech.

David's parents have tried to encourage attending and imitation skills by holding him on their laps in front of a mirror. David has shown only a fleeting interest in this activity and usually cries in his plea to escape the situation.

**Activity:** A small jar of soap bubbles provides an enjoyable play-time activity for David and his parents. They quickly discover that blowing bubbles also provides many valuable learning experiences for David. David and his father sit on the floor opposite each other. David's father says: "Let's blow bubbles! Look, David!"

He positions the bubble-blower to his mouth at a height which "forces" David to look up at his face to see the bubbles. As he exaggerates the shape of his lips to blow, David becomes interested in watching his mouth and tries to imitate the blowing action.

David's father uses many simple directions to stimulate receptive language development.

*"Look, David. Pop the bubbles!  
Pop the bubbles with your finger!  
Step on the bubble with your foot!  
Help Dad blow!  
Look up!"*

His father uses many descriptive words as he talks about the bubbles:

*"Here's a big bubble!  
Here's a little bubble!  
These bubbles are wet!"*

He uses single words and gestures repeatedly in order to encourage David's expressive language development.

*"Wow! Bubbles! Pop! Pop! Pop!  
Do you want more?  
Can you tell Dad more?  
Okay. More bubbles Pop! Pop! Pop!"*

His father gestures with a pointing finger.

*"Where did the bubbles go?"*

Then he gestures with his hands.

*"All gone! Bubbles all gone."*

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