

# Early speech and language development strategies



**FACE-TO-FACE:** Try to be at your child's level so they can see your mouth and face while you are talking. This gives your child clues for making sounds. Your facial expression attracts their attention and helps your words stand out.



**LABEL AND COMMENT:** Talk about items and actions during daily activities with your child, such as "Filling the tub", "Daddy! Daddy's home!", "I found your shoes!", "More milk?", "Beep-beep!" and "Bye-bye."



**GESTURE:** While you say words, try to pair them with a hand gesture, facial expression or the use of an object. For example, wave while saying "bye-bye" or spread your arms while saying "BIG doggy" or sing *The Wheels on the Bus* while performing the actions with your hands.



**USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE:** Use short simple sentences when your child is learning to talk. For example, "Train! Train goes fast. Choo-choo says the train." Mix this with adult sentences, so they are exposed to both.



**IMITATE:** Imitate your child's sounds and words or facial expressions. This shows you are interested in their language and acknowledges their communication attempt.



**REPEAT:** Saying new words often and in different contexts helps to build your child's vocabulary. For example, "I see a red car," "Let's eat the red apple," or "Get your red hat."



**INTERPRET:** If your child is trying to say a word or is pointing at something, pair a word or phrase with their attempt to communicate. For example, if your child says, "baba" then you say, "Yes, here is your bottle."



**WAIT:** Give your child time to think of a response. Sometimes they need time to understand what you have said.



**SHARE BOOKS:** Find books with large pictures and few words to hold your child's interest. Label and point to pictures. You do not have to read every written word. Make up a story or exaggerate your speech. Rereading the same book of their choice helps to teach vocabulary and gives them ownership of this activity.