

# Enjoy the Moment...

Have Fun, Connect and Wonder, Pause and Wait

## Help Your Child Communicate by....

### Getting Face to Face

- This might mean changing your position so you can look directly into your child's eyes. Being face to face lets you make a **positive connection** by seeing what your child is interested in & noticing any attempts to communicate.

### O.W.L. Observe, Wait, Listen

- **Observe** what your child is interested in.
- **Wait** for your child to take a turn by silently counting to 10.
- **Listen** to your child's attempts to communicate.

### Following Your Child's Lead

- Once you know what your child is interested in, you can join in by commenting on what it is, or what the child is doing with it, or you can take turns playing with it.
- **Respond** with **warmth & enthusiasm** to your child's attempts to play & communicate

### Imitating Your Child's Actions, Sounds & Words

- **Copy** your child's actions. If your child claps his hands, clap *your* hands. If your child says "baba", say "baba". If your child says "ball", say "ball".
- Infants, toddlers and preschoolers love to be copied.
- Copying your child encourages your child to copy you.

### Interpreting Your Child's Message

- **Say what your child would say if he could.** If your child runs to the door & looks at you, you could point to the door & say, "outside". If your child points to the cookies, point to the cookies & say "cookie". If your child says "cookie", interpret for him by saying "more cookie" etc.



## Commenting

- Use words to describe what your child is looking at or playing with. If your child is playing with blocks & stacking them, you could say, “blocks, blocks on, another block”.
- **Resist the urge** to ask questions that you know the answer to e.g., what colour is it? Turn it into a comment “It’s a red balloon”
- Commenting teaches your child new words and **what he could say**.

## Taking turns

- Take a turn and then **WAIT** for your child to take a turn. As soon as your child takes a turn, take another turn and wait again.
- **Strive for five**-that is, aim for at least 5 turns back & forth.



## Saying less

- **Saying less** increases the chances that your child can understand & imitate your words.
- **Speak slowly & emphasize** each word.

## Playing Repetitive Games, Singing Repetitive Songs & Reading Repetitive Books

- It helps a child know what to say if he can **predict** what words come next. Repetitive games (peek-a-boo), repetitive books (Brown Bear, Brown Bear) & songs (The Wheels on the Bus) repeat the same words over & over and are easier for a child to fill in the blanks.
- If you **pause** in the same spot and **wait**, your child could fill in the blanks once he becomes familiar with the game/song or book.

## Giving Your Child a Reason to Communicate

- Give your child a reason to communicate by not anticipating his needs. Offer **choices** e.g., at snack time, offer “milk or juice”, “banana or apple.” It’s easier for your child to make a choice when you give him 2 choices.
- Instead of giving your child the entire banana, cut it up into slices, give him **just a few** ....then wait so that he has a reason to ask for more.
- Think about placing a favorite object **in view** but **out of reach** ....then wait for him to ask for it.

## Limit Screen Time

- Screen time for children younger than 2 years is not recommended. For children 2 to 5 years, limit routine screen time to less than 1 hour per day<sup>2</sup>.
- Infants learn best by interacting with people. Research has demonstrated that even when the television is on in the background, infants and their caregivers speak less<sup>3</sup>.

1. Jan Pepper and Elaine Weitzman, 2004. It Takes Two to Talk: A Practical Guide for Parents of Children with Language Delays.
2. Canadian Pediatric Society. 2017. Position Statement. Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world.
3. Masur, E.F. Flynn, V. Olson, J. 2015. The Presence of Background Television During Young Children’s Play in American Homes.