

Promoting Communication Strategies: Activity Cards

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These activity cards provide examples for how the Promoting Communication Strategies can be used across a variety of routines: play, book reading, and various daily routines.

To create activity cards to distribute to parents or care providers:

1. Print each page on cardstock, with each routine printed on a different color.
2. Cut along dotted line. Cards may be laminated.
3. Distribute cards individually, or, use a single hole-punch and a binder ring to bind the cards into a complete set. The attached lists can be used to easily locate specific cards and/or track which cards the family has received.



List of Cards by Routine, then Strategy

Card #	Routine	Strategy	
1	Setting up the Environment	Routines	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		Setting Up Play Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		Books (A)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		Books (B)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Books	Following the Child's Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		Commenting and Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		Imitating and Expanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		Asking Open-Ended Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		Giving Positive Attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		Providing Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		Fill in the Blank	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Dressing/Grooming	Following the Child's Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		Commenting and Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		Imitating and Expanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		Asking Open-Ended Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		Giving Positive Attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		Providing Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		Fill in the Blank	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Household Routines	Following the Child's Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		Commenting and Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
21		Imitating and Expanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		Asking Open-Ended Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		Giving Positive Attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		Providing Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
25		Fill in the Blank	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	Meal/Snack	Following the Child's Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
27		Commenting and Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
28		Imitating and Expanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
29		Asking Open-Ended Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
30		Giving Positive Attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
31		Providing Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
32		Fill in the Blank	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	Outdoor Play	Following the Child's Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
34		Commenting and Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
35		Imitating and Expanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
36		Asking Open-Ended Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
37		Giving Positive Attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
38		Providing Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
39		Fill in the Blank	<input type="checkbox"/>
40	Outings	Following the Child's Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
41		Commenting and Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
42		Imitating and Expanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
43		Asking Open-Ended Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
44		Giving Positive Attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
45		Providing Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
46		Fill in the Blank	<input type="checkbox"/>
47	Play	Following the Child's Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>
48		Commenting and Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>
49		Imitating and Expanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
50		Asking Open-Ended Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
51		Giving Positive Attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
52		Providing Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
53		Fill in the Blank	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	Household Routines	19	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meal/Snack	26	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outdoor Play	33	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outings	40	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Play	47	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commenting and Labeling	Books	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dressing/Grooming	13	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Household Routines	20	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meal/Snack	27	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outdoor Play	34	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outings	41	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Play	48	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	Play	49	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	Household Routines	22	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meal/Snack	29	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outdoor Play	36	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outings	43	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Play	50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving Positive Attention	Books	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dressing/Grooming	16	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Household Routines	23	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meal/Snack	30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outdoor Play	37	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outings	44	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	Dressing/Grooming	17	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Household Routines	24	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meal/Snack	31	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outdoor Play	38	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outings	45	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Play	52	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fill in the Blank	Books	11	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dressing/Grooming	18	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Household Routines	25	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Meal/Snack	32	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Environmental Arrangement

Routines

Follow a regular schedule of activities throughout the day and set up regular routines that become familiar to children.

- Plan a range of activities throughout the day – book time, play time, outdoor time, music time, etc.
- Create a daily schedule, no matter how simple that might be, that will become predictable to your child. Follow it as much as you can while still being flexible when necessary.
- When moving from one activity to another, give children a warning. “In two minutes, we’re going to start cleaning up.”
- Avoid having children wait between activities. Get them involved with an activity, such as singing a song or playing a guessing game to keep them engaged.

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Environmental Arrangement

Setting up play areas

Set up areas within your home to promote opportunities for communication throughout the day.

- Have a regular place to keep toys. Allow some to be available to children throughout the day by placing them within reach. Keep toys throughout the house in baskets or bins that are arranged with all pieces together, such as the kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom.
- Have a few special toys set aside that you can bring out when you need to make a phone call, or are busy with another task.
- Store some toys out of reach, but within view so children have an opportunity to communicate their desire for those toys.
- Rotate toys so that children have an opportunity to play with a variety of toys, and don't become bored with the same toys all the time.
- Post family pictures, pictures from magazines, or artwork on the refrigerator that you can talk about when your child shows interest.

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Environmental Arrangement

Books (A)

Set up routines and areas within your home to encourage book activities.

- Have books available for children to look at on their own throughout the day.
- Create a book area with comfortable seating to encourage children to spend time with books.
- Allow babies to play with board books, bang them, and chew on them.
- If your child likes to skip pages, doesn't listen to the entire story, or gets distracted, that is okay. Follow your child's lead and enjoy your time together.

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Environmental Arrangement

Books (B)

Set up routines and areas within your home to encourage book activities.

- Talk about what you see in the book and ask questions. Try to avoid asking your child to “listen quietly.” Instead, talk about the story, the pictures, the characters, or whatever your child is interested in.
- Look at books together throughout the day. Try to set a regular “book time” each day.
- Cut out pictures from magazines or use family pictures to make a poster or a book, or post pictures on the refrigerator to talk about.

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Following a Child's Lead

Books

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

- When a child is looking at books, join them. Let the child lead the activity by turning pages, talking about the pictures, or telling the story.
- Read the story, but if the child begins talking about the characters, the pictures, or the story, don't insist that the child just listen quietly. Encourage your child to join in and talk about what your child enjoys about the book.
- Comment on the pictures, label the characters, imitate the child's vocalizations, and expand on what the child says while looking at the book.

Commenting and Labeling

Books

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

- Describe what is going on in the story, the character's actions, or what you see in the pictures.
"Thomas is helping his friends."
- Label the colors and shapes you see in the pictures.
"I see a yellow moon."
- Talk about how the characters are feeling.
"He's so happy. He found his puppy."
"Aw, Elmo looks sad. He has a sad face."

Imitating and Expanding

Books

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child, and expand by adding new information or words.

- If your child points to a picture in a book and says, "bike," expand on what your child said by saying something more about the picture, such as, *"Yes, he's riding his bike to school."*
- While looking at a book, your child says "da" in response to a picture of a dog, imitate and expand by saying, *"Dog; that dog is playing."*
- While reading books together, listen to what your child is talking about, and expand on what he or she is saying. If a child says, "moon," expand with, *"That IS the moon. It's a full moon."*

Asking open-ended questions

Books

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways rather than simply "yes" or "no."

- Ask about the pictures in the book.
"What do you see?" or "Where is the boy?"
- Ask about the story.
"What is happening?" or "What is going to happen next?"
- Ask, *"What book would you like to read?" or "Where should we sit to read our story?"*

Giving positive attention

Books

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

- Actively looking at and reading a book with your child is positive attention.

"Look, you are holding a book. Let's read it together."

"You just pointed to the truck. That's a big red fire truck."

- Give your child praise for wanting to look at books.

"I am so happy that you like reading books!"

Providing Choices

Books

Provide two or more objects or activities that a child can choose from. This gives an opportunity for communication.

- Give a child two books to choose from.

"Would you like to read this one or that one?"

- Offer a choice of HOW you look at a book.

"Would you like me to read, or would you like to read to me?"

Fill in the Blank

Books

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate—remember to use this strategy when your child knows what to fill in the blank.

- While reading a favorite book, leave off the end of a sentence or phrase for the child to complete.

"The cow jumped over the _____" or "Brown bear, brown bear, what do you ____?"

- When looking at picture books, point to a familiar pictures and say,

"Look, it's a ____" and allow the child to fill in the blank.

Following a Child's Lead Dressing/Grooming

Notice what a child is interested in and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

- Notice where your child is looking and talk about the focus of their attention.
"What are we doing now? We are putting our shoes on."
- Comment on what you are doing.
"I'm taking off your diaper...oh that's wet...now let's clean with the wipe."
- Imitate what your child says during tooth brushing.
If your child says "bu, bu" while tooth brushing say, "That's right, brush, brush, brush!"

Commenting and Labeling Dressing/Grooming

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys or materials.

- Label the colors, objects, or characters on clothing.
"Your shirt has a dump truck on it."
"I see Elmo on your shirt."
"You are going to wear a blue shirt to school today."
 - Talk about what you are doing as you are dressing or grooming.
"We're washing our hands."
- Say, *"That's your right arm,"* as the child puts their right arm through their shirt sleeve.
"We're brushing your hair."

Imitating and Expanding Dressing/Grooming

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child and expand by adding new information or words.

- If your child says "ba" when he or she is taking a bath, imitate what your child has said by saying, "Bath."
- While getting dressed, you ask your child to hold up his or her arms. Your child might say, "Up!" Expand with, *"You put your arms up!"*
- When your child is washing their hands they might say "wash." Expand with, *"Yes, we are washing our hand,"* or *"Your hands are going to be so clean!"*

Asking open-ended questions Dressing/Grooming

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways rather than simply "yes" or "no."

- Ask about body parts as you bathe or get dressed.
Ask, "What is this?" while pointing to body parts such as knees, stomach, and hands.
- Ask your child to tell you what he or she would like to wear.
"What would you like to wear today?"
- While toileting, hand washing, grooming, or dressing, ask *"What's next?"*
"Which pajamas do you want to wear?"

Giving positive attention

Dressing/Grooming

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

- Encourage your child to talk during dressing and grooming routines by listening, following his or her lead, and talking about what you are doing together.
- Tell a child how nicely they are helping when you are changing their diaper, getting dressed, or brushing teeth.
"You are waiting so nicely for me to finish with your diaper."
"What a good helper you are!"
- Give a child positive attention for doing things on their own.
"You put your coat on all by yourself, great job!"
"Thank you for remembering to wash your hands after you went to the bathroom."

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Providing Choices

Dressing/Grooming

Provide two or more objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication. Make sure the choices are reasonable, and easy for a child to make a choice.

- Offer a choice of two clothing items, holding the options up.
"Do you want to wear your fish or your car shirt today?"
- Offer a choice in how your child helps during a bath.
"Would you like to wash your legs or would you like me to do it?"
"Should we put your shirt or your shorts on first?"
- Offer a choice in how you get ready for the day.
"Would you like to start brushing your teeth by yourself, or would you like me to help you do it?"

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Fill in the Blank

Dressing/Grooming

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate while engaged in the activity – remember to use this strategy when your child knows what to fill in the blank.

- During bath time, set up a routine over a few days or weeks in which you typically name body parts. "Here is your hand," "I'm washing your hand." Then, when you're pretty sure your child knows the name of certain body parts, start the phrase, "Here is your ____" or "We're washing your ____." Repeat the whole phrase including the missing word if your child does not fill in the blank.
- While changing their diaper (or sitting on potty chair) sing a familiar song and leave off a word for child to fill-in the blank. *"Row, row, row, your ____."* Say, *"boat"* for your child if they do not fill in the blank themselves.

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Following a Child's Lead

Household Routines

Notice what a child is interested in and use that interest to provide opportunities for communication.

- When your child shows interest while you're cleaning up the house or picking up toys, comment on what you are doing.
"We're putting your pajamas away. Then we'll hang up your shirts."
- While cleaning up the play area together, ask open-ended questions, comment, or give choices.
"What toys are you going to pick up? I am picking up the puzzle pieces."
"Would you like to pick up the cars or the blocks?"
- While your child shows an interest in helping you prepare food, give positive attention, comment on what you're doing, and expand on what the child says.
"We're rinsing these strawberries and then we'll slice them."
Child says "Patta", so adult says, "Pasta. That's right. We're stirring the pasta."

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Commenting and Labeling

Household Routines

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys or materials.

- "We have a lot of laundry to fold today. We'll match up all of these socks."*
- "Apples, grapes, and a melon. We're mixing the fruit up. It will be fruit salad."*
- "Oh good, you're picking up all of those cars."*
- Label household items in which your child shows an interest.
"These washcloths are small; the towels are big. We can fold the washcloths first."
"These black socks are daddy's. The white socks are yours and brothers'."

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Imitating and Expanding

Household Routines

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child, and expand by adding new information or words.

- While wiping a table, a child might say "I clean." Expand on this with, "Yes, you're cleaning the table so nicely. It was very messy."
- While picking up toys, a child might say "clean up." Expand with, "Yes, it is time to clean up. You're picking up the trains and cars. I am picking up the dinosaurs."
- When folding laundry, your child might say "socks." Expand on this by saying, "Yes, these are socks. We wear them to keep our feet warm."
- While helping you put groceries away, your child might say "nana" when he sees bananas. Respond with, "Bananas. Yes, you do love bananas!"

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Asking open-ended questions

Household Routines

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways rather than simply "yes" or "no."

- During clean-up, ask "Where does this go?" or "Which toys are you going to put away?"
- While putting laundry away, ask "Who wears this shirt?" "Whose pants are these?" or "Who is on this shirt?"
- During transitions between routines, ask "What are we going to do next?" or "Where are we going?"
- While setting the table, ask questions about what is needed and where things should go. "What do we need to set the table?" "Where do we put the cups?" or "Who uses this cup?"

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Giving positive attention

Household Routines

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

- Give positive attention when your child attempts to communicate by listening, following her lead, and responding. While preparing dinner, your child may gesture to be involved or make vocalizations that sound like “help” while looking at what you are doing. Respond with “You want to help. Yes, you can stir.” Continue commenting or asking questions to encourage your child to talk more while helping.

- Give your child attention for holding their bottle or cup by themselves.

“You are such a big girl, holding your cup all by yourself.”

- Give your child positive attention when they help you around the house.

“It is so nice that you are helping me to empty the dishwasher. You know exactly where those spoons go.”

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Providing Choices

Household Routines

Provide two or more objects or activities from which a child can choose to give an opportunity for communication.

- During clean-up times, ask your child which toys he/she wants to put away.

“I will pick up the puzzle pieces. Would you like to help pick up the little people or the cars?”

- While getting ready to leave in the morning, give choices to allow your child to make choices about which shoes to wear, which socks, which toy or book he would like to take with him.

“Would you like to wear the train or the dinosaur?”

- When getting ready for bed, give choices about which pajamas your child wears, which books you read at bedtime, or which stuffed animal she takes to bed with her.

“Do you want to sleep with Thomas or Blue?”

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Fill in the Blank

Household Routines

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate while engaged in the activity – remember to use this strategy when your child knows what to fill in the blank.

- While folding laundry, label the items that are being folded. “Mommy’s sock,” “Daddy’s shorts,” “Sammy’s” and leave off the last word for your child to fill in.

- While setting the table, describe what you are doing. Label “One plate for Mommy, one plate for Daddy, one plate for _____.”

- Create a familiar routine when you are getting ready go out by introducing a familiar phrase and using it regularly, such as “Let’s get ready to GO, GO, GO!” Once your child is familiar with this saying, used whenever you are leaving the house, you can say “Let’s get ready to....” and your child will then fill in “GO, GO, GO!”

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Following a Child's Lead

Meal/Snack

Notice what a child is interested in and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

- Follow your child's interest in what the two of you talk about during meal times. Talk about the food you are eating, how it tastes, its texture, or where it comes from.

"Those carrots are orange."

"How does that apple taste?" Wait for a response, but if there is no response, say *"That's a crunchy apple!"*

"What are you eating now?"

- Listen to what your child talks about during meals and snacks, and follow their lead. If during dinner, your child talks about what happened earlier in the day follow her lead, ask open-ended questions, and comment on what your child says.

Commenting and Labeling

Meal/Snack

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys or materials.

- Name the foods children are eating.

"We're having noodles and carrots with dinner"

"Ethan is eating applesauce and crackers"

- Talk about the colors, texture, or temperature of the foods you are eating together.

"This banana is very sweet."

"Mmm. This is yummy."

"The chicken is hot."

- At a restaurant, talk about how the servers take orders or bring the food out, on the people eating around you, or on objects you see around you in the restaurant.

Imitating and Expanding

Meal/Snack

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child, and expand by adding new information or words.

- If your child says, "ju" for juice, imitate "juice," modeling the word, while you are pouring the juice.

- If your child says "juice" expand by saying, "Juice please" or "May I have juice please." Your child does not need to repeat you in order to get the juice. You will simply be showing her how she can ask for juice.

- While your child is wiping the table, he says, "I cleaning." Expand on this with, "Yes, you're cleaning the table so nicely."

Asking open-ended questions

Meal/Snack

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways rather than simply "yes" or "no."

- Ask open-ended questions about what you are eating.

"What are you eating?"

"What color are those grapes?"

- While cooking a meal, talk about the foods you are preparing.

"Where do you think this corn came from?"

"What is your favorite food?"

- While at a restaurant, ask questions as you look at the menu together.

"What do you see in this picture?"

"What do you think the chef is cooking now?"

Giving positive attention

Meal/Snack

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

- Give your child positive attention and praise for vocalizing or talking by responding and following his or her lead.

"Bottle, that's right. You are such a big girl, holding your bottle all by yourself."

"Mmm, Milk. You like milk."

- Listen and respond with positive attention when children talk during mealtimes.

"Great job asking so nicely!" when the child asks for an item to be passed during dinner.

- Give your child positive attention for helping you in the kitchen.
"You are such a big help to me, thank you for bringing your plate to the sink."

Providing Choices

Meal/Snack

Provide two or more objects or activities from which a child can choose provide an opportunity for communication.

- Give a choice of cup, plates, or utensils.

"Would you like the blue cup or the red cup?"

"Would you like the Sesame Street plate or the Dora plate?"

- Give a choice of foods. Show the options when you can.

"Would you like goldfish or an apple?"

- Offer a choice of tasks.

"Would you like to put your napkin in the trash or your cup in the sink?"

"Would you like to eat snack inside or outside?"

Fill in the Blank

Meal/Snack

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate while engaged in the activity – remember to use this strategy when your child knows what to fill in the blank.

- While eating a snack together say, *"Yummy, yummy, yummy in my tummy, tummy, tummy."* After you know your child is familiar with this phrase, pause in place of the third "tummy" and wait to see if your child says tummy. If they do not, finish the phrase for them.

- Anticipate when your child might want something. Feed them 3 or 4 bites of food and then pause for 3-5 seconds. If the child does not ask for more, start a phrase for them, such as "Can I have more _____?" and let the child fill in the blank. If the child does not fill in the blank, finish the phrase for the child.

Following a Child's Lead

Outdoor Play

Notice what a child is interested in and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

- Comment about your child's activities.

"You're climbing UP the ladder and sliding DOWN the slide."

"You are filling your bucket with sand."

- Allow your child to direct your activities.

If your child is drawing flowers with chalk, join in by helping draw trees or a sun. Talk about what you are both drawing.

- Notice what your child sees while outside and ask open-ended questions about it.

"That's a big truck. What are they doing out there?"

"That is a loud airplane! Where do you think it's going?"

Commenting and Labeling

Outdoor Play

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys or materials.

- Label your child's actions.

"You're such a fast runner!"

"You are swinging so high!"

- Comment on what you see outside together.

"That is a big red fire truck."

"That tree is very tall."

"There's a squirrel. He's looking for nuts."

- Label your child's toys.

"You have green floaties on to help you swim."

Imitating and Expanding

Outdoor play

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child and expanding by adding new information or words.

- While playing outside and your child says "ba" while throwing the ball, expand on what he or she said with, *"You are throwing the ball to Daddy."*

- While playing with you in the park, your child points and signs *"bird."* Expand on what he or she said with, *"Yes, that is a blue bird."*

- While playing on the swing set, your child makes a sound of pleasure. Imitate this sound and expand on it by saying, *"We are having fun!"*

Asking open-ended questions

Outdoor play

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways rather than simply "yes" or "no."

- Ask your child to tell you about what they are experiencing while playing outside.

"What do you see?"

"What is the dog doing?"

"Where are the yellow flowers?"

- Ask the child to tell you how they want to play outside.

"What do you want to play with?"

"What should we do with this ball?"

Giving positive attention

Outdoor play

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

- Playing with your child gives them positive attention.
- Give your child positive attention for doing things on their own.
"Look at you; you went down the slide all by yourself!"
"You rode your bike down the driveway all by yourself, great job!"
- Give positive attention when your child plays nicely with another child.
"I like how you are taking turns bouncing the ball with your brother."

Providing Choices

Outdoor Play

Provide two or more objects or activities from which a child can choose provide an opportunity for communication.

- Offer choices of activities.
"Should we go for a bike ride or a walk?"
"Do you want to swing or go down the slide?"
- Offer choices of location,
"Should we go to Nana's pool or the pool in our neighborhood?"
- Provide a choice of toys or materials, while showing the choices.
"Which would you like? The blue ball or the red ball?"
"Do you want the hula hoop or the jump rope?"

Fill in the Blank

Outdoor Play

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate while engaged in the activity – remember to use this strategy when your child knows what to fill in the blank.

- While riding bikes say, *"On your mark- get set- ____"* and give your child the opportunity to finish the phrase with *"go."*
- Blow bubbles for your child. Hold the bubble wand to your mouth and say, *"one-two-_____."* Once the child vocalizes or gestures to fill in the blank begin to blow the bubbles.
- Sing a familiar song while playing outside, and pause to allow your child an opportunity to fill in the blank. For example sing, *"Head, shoulders, knees and _____."* If your child does not yet say "toes", he/she may vocalize or move his/her toes to gesture the correct response.

Following a Child's Lead

Outings

Notice what a child is interested in and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

- Notice what your child is looking at or watching and label it.

"That is a big red fire truck."

"You're sliding. You're going down, down, down."

- Ask open-ended questions about what your child is interested in while shopping.

"There are so many different shirts. What colors do you like best?"

- Notice what your child is interested in and give choices based on that interest.

"There's the playground. Do you want to swing or slide?"

"Which cereal would you rather have this week?"

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Commenting and Labeling

Outings

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys or materials.

- Talk about what you are shopping for at the grocery store or while doing other shopping.

"We need milk, bread, and cereal today."

"I see some really ripe bananas."

- Label what you see or what is going to happen when you go to new places.

"We're on an elevator. We're going up to the 2nd floor."

"The doctor is going to listen to your heart, look in your ears and your throat, and feel your belly."

- Name the places you will as you go about your outings.

"First, we'll go to the post office and then we'll go to the store."

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Imitating and Expanding

Outings

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child and expand by adding new information or words.

- Repeat what your child says, when he or she names things seen in a store. If your child says, "shoe," imitate and say, "yes, shoes."

Expand, and say, *"Blue shoes,"* or *"Those shoes look fast!"*

- Expand on what your child talks about at the park. If your child says, "swing," expand with, *"Yes, you're swinging back and forth."*

- Continue to comment and ask open-ended questions about what your child talks about to extend the conversation.

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Asking open-ended questions

Outings

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways rather than simply "yes" or "no."

- Ask, *"Where are we going?"* or *"How are we going to get there?"* when going out to familiar places.

- Ask questions about what your child sees while you are out.

"What color is that car?"

"What shape is this sign?"

"What is that child doing?"

- If your child does not answer a question, simply answer the question yourself and continue your conversation.

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Giving positive attention

Outings

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

- Give positive attention to your child when they point to or attempt to label things they see while out and about.

"You pointed to the mailbox. We put our cards for Grandma in there for the mailman."

- Give your child positive attention when they are attempting to communicate or using nice words with their siblings.

"Thank you for talking so nicely together during our car ride."

- Give positive attention to your child when they participate in an activity with you.

"You helped me pick out the soap and toothpaste. Great job!"

Providing Choices

Outings

Provide two or more objects or activities from which a child can choose to provide an opportunity for communication.

- Provide a choice in how you do your errands.

"Which store should we go to first? The grocery store or the drug store?"

- Offer a choice of carts in the grocery store.

"Would you like the fire truck cart or the regular cart?"

- Offer choices while shopping.

"Do you want bananas or pears?"

Fill in the Blank

Outings

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate while – remember to use this strategy when your child knows what to fill in the blank.

- While shopping for groceries, hold up a familiar item, such a milk, bananas, or cereal, and say, *"We're buying ____"* and allow the child to fill in the blank.

- While driving in car, and your child points out a truck say, *"Yes, that's a big red ____."*

- While driving in the car, sing one of your child's favorite songs.

"Twinkle, twinkle, little ____."

"If you're happy and you know it, ____."

"The wheels on the bus go ____."

Following a Child's Lead**Play**

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

- Describe what your child is doing.

"You're hugging the doll."

During a board game say, *"You moved 3 spaces!"*

- Label what your child is playing with.

"That ball is bouncing so high."

- Allow children to direct your activities.

If a child is lining up blocks to make a road, join in and build a road. Talk about where that road might be going or who is driving on that road. Try to avoid directing the child how to play.

Commenting and Labeling**Play**

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys or materials.

- While playing ball, label your child's activities.

"Playing ball" or "Bouncing the ball so high!"

- Comment on the activities you are doing together.

"We're building a tall tower."

"We're making music!"

- Talk about your play activities as you play together.

"This puzzle has pictures of animals... cow, pig, chicken"

- While playing board games, label whose turn it is.

"Now it's Max's turn."

Imitating and Expanding**Play**

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child, and expand by adding new information or words.

- Imitate the sounds your child makes. If your child babbles and says *"ba ba ba,"* make eye contact and say *"ba ba ba."* As long as the child keeps making sounds, keep imitating those sounds.

- If your child signs *"more,"* imitate this sign and say, *"More."*

- While playing with dolls say, *"Baby is going to sleep."* If the child imitates you and says *"sleep,"* repeat what you said to the child, *"Yes, baby is going to sleep."*

- If your child points and says *"car,"* respond by expanding on what your child said:

"Car, that's a fast car."

"Yes, that's a blue car."

Asking open-ended questions**Play**

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply *"yes"* or *"no."*

- Notice what your child is playing with or interested in and ask, *"What are you doing?" "What do you have there?"* or *"What do you see?"*

- Ask questions that encourage a more lengthy response. *"Where is your truck going?"* or *"What are you cooking for us today?"*

- During a game ask, *"Whose turn is it?"* or *"How many spaces did you move?"*

If your child does not respond after a pause, simply answer the question yourself and continue your activity.

Giving positive attention**Play**

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

- Tell your child how nicely they are playing.

"Wow, look how nice you are playing with the blocks."

"You are sharing your toys so nicely."

- Speak to your child using positive words.

"You are doing great!"

"You are such a handsome boy."

- Give your child positive attention when they are attempting to communicate.

"Good job using your words."

"Thank you for asking so nicely."

Providing Choices**Play**

Provide two or more objects or activities from which a child can choose provide an opportunity for communication.

- Offer a choice of two activities that your child is familiar with.

"Would you like to color or would you like to dance?"

- Give a choice of toys.

"Would you like the puzzle or the dolls?"

"Shall we paint with the red paint or the green paint?"

- Offer a choice of music during play time.

"Should we listen to Sesame Street or Dora?"

Fill in the Blank**Play**

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate while engaged in the activity. Remember to use this strategy when your child knows what to fill in the blank.

- While playing with blocks say, *"Blocks go up, up, up and down, down, down."* Then after several repeats say it again, however this time say, *"Blocks go up, up, up"* and then pause, providing an opportunity for the child to complete the phrase. If the child does not attempt to fill in the blank, say *"down, down, down."*

- While playing with a baby doll say, *"Time for baby to go night, night"* then begin to sing the song that is sung to your child every night before bed. While singing this familiar song, parent leaves off word at end of phrase.

"You are my sunshine, my only ____."