

# Promoting Language Development in Everyday Activities

Language is not only learned and developed in the classroom. There are many every day experiences that can be turned into a “language lesson” to assist children in developing language skills. In actuality, the thought processes required for language is the building block for nearly all other skills. Therefore, the earlier a child begins to master these skills, the more adept he or she will be at future learning.

## Language Development

Language development involves both using and understanding language. Language expression is the ability to produce sounds that are used to express a child's needs and thoughts, while language comprehension is the ability to understand others. Activities such as listening, singing, repeating, reading, and speaking all promote language development. A child's language develops better when they are immersed in a language environment where both spoken and written word are being used.

Here are some things you can do to promote the development of language skills:

### Infant

- ✦ Talk and sing to them as you work around the house.
- ✦ Talk to them in complete sentences.
- ✦ Read stories to them so they can see, hear, and recognize new words.

### Toddler

- ✦ Talk to them before they go to bed. Discuss what happened that day, and talk about the plans for tomorrow.
- ✦ Encourage your child to recognize symbols and attach them to words by asking them to look for certain items when you go shopping.
- ✦ Respond to their language, even when it doesn't make sense.

### Preschooler

- ✦ Label items in their rooms so they associate the written word with the object.
- ✦ When riding in the car, start making up a story. Every time the car stops, the next person adds to the story.
- ✦ Give your child the daily newspaper and a pencil. Have them circle words they can identify.

### Early Childhood

- ✦ When traveling to new places, designate your child to be the navigator, keeping an eye out for street names, store signs, and restaurants.
- ✦ Write down several items on your grocery list for your child to find when you go to the store.

- ✿ Have your child write down topics they would like to discuss and put them in the glove compartment of the car. When the car ride gets boring or stressful, pull out a topic and have a one-on-one conversation with your child.

#### *RESOURCES:*

The ABC's Of Child Development  
PBS  
<http://www.pbs.org/>

Mental Health America  
<http://www.nmha.org/>

#### *CANADIAN RESOURCES:*

About Kids Health  
<http://www.abooutkidshealth.ca/>

Children's Mental Health Ontario  
<http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/>

#### *REFERENCES:*

Speech and language development milestones. National Institute on Deaf and Other Communicative Disorders website. Available at <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/voice/speechandlanguage.asp#mychild> Updated April 2001. Accessed July 8, 2008.

Your child's communication: kindergarten. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association website. Available at <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/kindergarten.htm>. Published 2008. Accessed July 8, 2008.