

# LET'S TALK!

## BE FACE-TO-FACE

Getting face-to-face with your child allows them to see your facial expressions and your mouth as you talk. This will help your child learn how to copy you, and eventually start talking too!

### WHY?

- Let's your child see your face as your talk
- Helps your child to copy your expressions, gestures, and words
- Helps to build connection through eye-contact

### HOW?

- Get down to your child's level so that you are face-to-face
- See what your child is interested in
- Pay attention to how your child is trying to communicate (face, sounds, movements)

### TIPS!

- Get face-to-face by sitting on the floor, lying on your stomach, or sitting your child on your lap facing you
- Sing familiar songs face-to-face, or let your child see your face when you read to them
- Give positive feedback- if your child makes a face or a sound, react to encourage them

If you have any questions, please contact your  
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## FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S LEAD

Often, adults try to lead conversations or guide children towards a certain activity or type of play. Allowing your child to lead will help them to engage with you!

### WHY?

- Your child is more likely to talk if you are paying attention to what they are interested in, or playing how they want to play
- It encourages positive interactions- your child is more likely to engage with you if you share in their interests

### HOW?

- Play with what your child chooses (even if you are bored with it!)
- Play the way your child wants (even if it's not the "right" way)
- Follow your child to different activities as they shift interest

### TIPS!

- Get face-to-face first to see what your child is doing and how they are playing
- Talk about what your child is doing, and what they are interested in
- Try to keep up with your child! Their attention may shift quickly between activities

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## COPY YOUR CHILD'S ACTIONS, SOUNDS, & WORDS

Children learn by watching the adults around them. Before they learn how to talk, they must learn how to copy. This starts by copying your actions, sounds, and words!

### WHY?

- Children learn to copy actions before they learn to copy sounds or words
- Copying actions teaches children that what *they* do can affect what *you* do
- Children are encouraged to copy adult's actions if their own actions are copied first- this is the beginning of taking turns

### HOW?

- First, copy your child- wait for them to do something, watch them, then copy them
- Then, let your child copy you- do something, then wait for your child to copy
- Take turns copying each other back-and-forth- this is a conversation!

### TIPS!

- Pay attention to any attempts your child may be making to copy you, even the smallest sounds or gestures
- Give your child positive feedback when they copy you
- Be natural- try not to tell your child to copy you, just let it happen naturally

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# LET'S TALK!

## REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT, AND WAIT

Children need a *lot* of repetition to learn. To help your child learn new words, repeat the words as often as you can during the day. Try using them at different times, in different ways!

### WHY?

- The more a child hears a word, the more likely they are to learn it
- Children need to hear a word 50-350 times before they will use that word on their own
- Children learn words faster if they hear them used at different times in different ways

### HOW?

- Repeat, repeat, repeat!
- Talk about the same word in different ways (e.g. "Here is your sock. Sock on, other sock on. Blue sock. The sock is on your foot!")
- Wait at least 5 seconds for your child to respond using actions, sounds, or words

### TIPS!

- Repeat words that are meaningful to your child (e.g. "Mama", "open", "up", "teddy")
- Try choosing just a few words to target at a time, and use them throughout the day
- Resist jumping in if your child isn't responding- "awkward silence" is okay

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## INTERPRET THE MESSAGE

Your child is always communicating! You know that crying may mean that they are hungry, or reaching for you may mean that they want to be picked up. By interpreting their actions, sounds, and words and adding language, you can help your child to start talking more!

### WHY?

- Interpreting your child's messages shows them how they could use their words to communicate
- Interpreting your child's messages could help decrease their frustration if they are struggling to tell you what they want

### HOW?

- Pay attention to what your child is doing and try to guess what they may be trying to say
- Interpret what your child may have said and repeat it back to them
- Expand on what your child may have said to model language that they could use

### TIPS!

- Try to interpret actions, sounds, and words, and add language to them each time your child uses them (e.g. if they reach up for you, say "up")
- If your child tries to say a word, model how to say it, but don't correct them (e.g. if they say "te'fo", model "telephone")

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## GENTLE SABOTAGE

Sometimes children need extra motivation to start talking. By using desired items like favourite toys or snacks, you can teach your child that they can get what they want by using their words!

### WHY?

- Using desired objects helps to motivate your child to talk
- Your child will learn that their words can help them to get what they want
- Gentle sabotage can be worked into everyday activities

### HOW?

- Tempt your child to start talking by using desired objects (e.g. snacks, toys)
- Interrupt an activity that your child is engaged in by pausing (e.g. swinging, rolling a ball)
- Show your child something that they cannot reach or use on their own, then wait

### TIPS!

- Give your child just small pieces of a snack and wait for them to ask for more
- Forget to give your child something they need (e.g. spoon), but put it in their sight
- Open a jar of bubbles, blow some, then close the container tightly and wait

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## MODEL & EXPAND

Modelling and expanding teaches your child new words, and how to make longer sentences. The more you model and expand, the more likely they are to copy and learn!

### WHY?

- Modelling exposes your child to new words
- Children will learn to copy longer sentences to expand their language
- Modelling and expanding keeps the language focused on what your child is interested in

### HOW?

- Model words and short sentences throughout the day
- Expand on what your child says by repeating exactly what they say and adding 1-2 words
- If your child uses gestures add 1 word; if they use 1 word, use 2; if they use 2, use 3

### TIPS!

- Observe what your child is interested in, then model a sentence by commenting on what they are doing (e.g. "hat on!")
- Use modelling to demonstrate correct sounds and grammar, rather than correcting your child
- Always model 1 step ahead of your child

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## ACTION & DESCRIBING WORDS

Often, adults will focus on teaching children how to name people and objects (e.g. cat, sock, Dad). These words make up just a small part of our language. Action words and describing words will help children to learn more language, and form full sentences!

### WHY?

- Nouns (people, places, things) make up only a small part of our language
- Action words & describing words are important to forming full sentences
- Learning a mix of words will help children with language and literacy down the road

### HOW?

- Use action words to comment on what your child is doing, and what is happening around them (e.g. running, helping, playing)
- Describe people, places, and things using describing words (e.g. big, cold, sticky, loud)
- Mix up your language to expose your child to new words

### TIPS!

- Add describing words when labeling what your child is looking at or touching (e.g. the cat is *soft*, your boots are *dirty*)
- Model proper grammar with action words (e.g. he is *running*, she *fell* down)

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## COMMENTS VS. QUESTIONS

When we want our children to talk, it's easy to start questioning them all the time (e.g "what's this called?" "what colour is it?"). Using comments can help to *teach* your child language, instead of *testing* them. It also makes a more natural conversation!

### WHY?

- Commenting allows you to model language, and creates opportunities for your child to do the talking and asking
- Asking too many questions can be overwhelming
- Mixing comments and questions makes a more natural conversation

### HOW?

- Balance comments and questions- try to make 3 comments before asking a question
- Wait 10 seconds for your child to use a sound, word, or phrase while playing, comment on what they are doing, then wait
- *Teach* using comments instead of *testing* with questions

### TIPS!

- Comment on what your child is doing or interested in to model what they could say
- When asking questions try to use open ended questions that allow for more than a 1-word answer
- Think of commenting as teaching moments, and questioning as testing

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