

Help Your Child Develop Imitation Skills

by Leslie S. McColgin

What is imitation?

Imitation is the ability to copy the behavior of another person.

How do imitation skills develop?

1. One of the earliest forms of imitation is called "mutual imitation." This means that your child imitates you only when you have imitated the child first. Parents often play "babbling games" with their child. The child says "ga-ga" and the adult imitates "ga-ga." The child enjoys this response and tries again: "ga-ga." The child has just engaged in **mutual imitation**. Motor actions such as smiling, clapping, and tapping can be imitated in the same way. At first, you will have to let your child start the imitation game. As your child develops, you can start the game by babbling or making some action that you have heard or seen your child do often. Your child still isn't ready to imitate a sound or action that the child does not already know.
2. Next, your child begins to imitate sounds and actions that are similar, but not identical to the child's own. For example, a child might babble "pa-pa." The adult playing with the child might open and close the mouth without making any sound. At first the child might imitate this by babbling "pa-pa" again. However, this may soon change to the child opening and closing the mouth just like the adult *model*. The child will "figure out" how "pa-pa" and opening and closing the mouth are similar. Then the child will be able to imitate this "new" action. This is the beginning of having a "thought" that is *symbolic*.
3. Now the child experiments and explores with sounds and actions to make them more like the adult model's. The child imitates the adult more and more exactly. Soon the child will be able to imitate sounds and actions that the child has never tried before.
4. In the final stage, the child learns to imitate **without a model**. This is called **deferred imitation**. For example, a child once wanted to get a necklace out of a matchbox with a small

opening. First, the child tried turning it upside down and shaking it with no success. Finally, the child sat down, mouth slowly opening and closing. The child had imitated this movement before. Mentally, the child saw how opening and closing the mouth and the matchbox were similar. The child immediately opened the box! The child didn't need a model to imitate. Instead, the child used a similar action to the one the child had imitated before. At this stage, children will imitate "housework" with toy brooms and dishes and perform many actions similar to those of Mommy and Daddy.

Teaching Tips for Parents

1. Determine which level of difficulty is best for your child. Ask your child's speech and language clinician for guidance. Observe your child's behavior in many situations. Then choose activities at the appropriate level.
2. **Frequently** imitate your child. Imitate babbling, mouth movements, hand movements—any kind of movements, especially ones the child does over and over. Do this as often as you can throughout the day.
3. Continue to imitate your child, but change what you do **just a little bit**. If your child babbles "pa-pa," you babble "ba-ba" or open and close your mouth silently, as in the above example. Be very enthusiastic if your child imitates your "new" action. Write down some of your child's **sounds and movements** and how you're going to imitate them a **little** differently. Put your list on the refrigerator or other obvious place as a reminder.
4. Continue to imitate your child, but change your action a little more. If your child says "pa-pa," you say "pie-pie-pie." If your child claps hands together, you put hands on the floor. Praise your child and be enthusiastic when the child imitates you. Write down your child's actions and sounds and how you plan to imitate them. Later write in how your child imitated you.
5. Give your child toys that resemble things around the house: toy dolls, toy dishes, etc. Let the child play with brooms, pots, and pans and

"dress-up" clothes. These will give your child opportunities to experiment with actions you perform during the day. The child can dress dolls, "cook" food, sweep the floor, or "drive" cars.

Write down each action your child imitates without seeing you do it at that time. Write down ways your child does things that show the child is thinking—using an action that has been imitated before to solve a problem that requires a similar action. The child who opened the matchbox by relating an open and closed mouth (the familiar action) to opening the matchbox (similar action) is an example.

Vocabulary

Model—To provide an example of good speech or other behavior; to demonstrate a desired verbal response.

Symbol—A sign that stands for or represents a person, thing, action, quality, idea, or feeling.

Refer to:

3.4 Play Skills

Simplify Your Language to Help Your Child Understand

by Diann D. Grimm, M.A., C.C.C., Ed.S.

Introduction

Research has shown that parents all over the world change their normal language when speaking to their children. To simplify their language, parents change words used, speed of talking, *pitch*, and loudness. These changes are often called "motherese" or "fatherese."

Parents use motherese/fatherese as a "teaching language." When parents use simplified language, it makes it easier for their child to understand and learn language. Using motherese/fatherese encourages parent-child communication.

You may already use some of the tips presented below when talking with your child. Remember that a child with delayed language development may need extra language practice. Take every opportunity to talk with your child. Use these strategies consistently. The changes you make in your language can really help your child's language development.

Talking Tips for Parents

These strategies can be used with most *language impaired* children. But each child is unique, with different needs. Consult your *speech and language clinician* to discuss the best way to use these tips to help your child.

1. Use a slower speech rate.

Children who have trouble learning language often have difficulty understanding fast speech. Speaking slowly will make it easier for your child to understand you. This does not mean that you have to talk like a record at the wrong speed! Even a small change in your speech rate can improve your child's understanding of language.

2. Use shorter remarks.

A shorter message will be easier for your child to understand. How much should you shorten your remarks? Use phrases and sentences just beyond your child's language level. For example, a child who says single words should be given two-word phrases. For a child who is using two words at a time, three- or four-word phrases would be appropriate.

Your phrases are *models* or examples for your child to learn and imitate. These models should be stimulating, yet not too difficult to understand. Try to shorten most of the remarks you say to your child.

A good way to shorten your remarks is to pretend you're sending a telegram. A telegram includes only the most important content words. There are no words that carry no meaning. Here are examples of how to shorten your messages:

"Do you want some juice?" becomes
"Want juice?"

"That big horse is over there" becomes
"See the big horse."

Another way to shorten your remarks is to break the message into separate parts. In this way you avoid complex sentences that may be confusing for your child. For example:

"Do you want the cookie or the cracker?" becomes "Want cookie? Want cracker?"

"First you'll take your bath and then I will read you a story" becomes "Your bath is first. Then your story."

These remarks may seem grammatically incorrect. But, they use language that your child can understand. If your language model is too difficult, your child will not be able to understand or imitate, and language learning will not occur. As your child's language skills develop, you will be able to model more complex phrases and sentences.

3. Use simple sentences.

It will also be easier for your child to understand sentences that have a simple structure. Sentences that contain a basic subject + verb + object or adjective are the easiest. For example:

Subject (people, things)	Verb (action)	Object or Adjective (people, things, places) or (descriptive words)
Tommy	+	drank + milk.
Dog	+	is + big.
Apples	+	are + red.
He	+	ran + home.

As your child's language develops, include more information in your remarks. Add words within the simple sentence structure. Keep your remarks just beyond your child's language level. For example:

Tommy drank all the milk.

The dog is big and brown.

These apples are very red.

He ran quickly home for supper.

Avoid using sentences that are too complex, such as "The boy who was big and mean hit the girl." "Daddy will read you a story when he comes home from work" is also too difficult. The child has to process too much information in order to understand your message.

4. Use repetition.

When you repeat words, phrases, and sentences your child has a better chance to learn and understand:

Child: Doll

Parent: Sue's doll.

Parent: Your doll is pretty.

Parent: I like your doll.

These interactions illustrate how much you can stimulate your child's language through repetition. This parent has modeled several different sentence structures. New information and vocabulary were added each time. Yet, the essential meaning of the child's message was kept and repeated.

5. Exaggerate important words with your voice.

Children learn to respond to changes in people's voices. Your child will pay more attention to words that you stress when you talk. So, put more stress on the word or words you want your child to hear and remember. For example:

"**B**ig dog!"

"**J**uice all gone!"

"You're a **g**ood boy!"

You can also change your tone of voice or *inflection* to help your child understand your message. Inflection is controlled by changing the loudness and pitch of your voice, either high or low. These changes can emphasize a word and mark the difference between questions and statements.

6. Use gestures when you speak.

Using gestures helps your child understand the meaning of your spoken message. Natural gestures you can use include:

Facial gestures—surprised, excited, happy, sad, upset, interested, etc.

Hand gestures—Come here. Give to me. I want. You want. Stop. Go. etc.

Body postures—Arms out to indicate a hug. Folded arms to indicate anger.

Vocabulary

Inflection—Using high or low, rising or falling tone of voice to emphasize words and indicate a question or a statement.

Language impairment—Any difficulty expressing or understanding language.

Model—Give your child an example of correct speech to follow or imitate.

Motherese/fatherese—The simplified language parents use to teach their child to speak.

Pitch—Sound quality associated with high or low frequency of vibration, as in high or low musical notes.

Speech and language clinician—A person who is qualified to diagnose and treat speech, language, and voice disorders.

Refer to:

4.8 Help Your Child Learn to Ask and Answer Questions

6.1.2 Giving Directions to Your Child

6.1.3 How You Talk With Your Child is Important!

Encourage Your Child's Language Development

by Diann D. Grimm, M.A., C.C.C., Ed.S.

Introduction

How parents respond to their child can encourage—or discourage—language development. A child might say, "He eated the cake." The child's parents may reply, "No, not eated. That's wrong! Say, 'he ate the cake.' Say it after me." Or, they may simply reply, "He *ate* the cake. We *ate* the cake, too." The correction is given in both cases. But, if you were the child, which reply would encourage you to keep trying to learn?

Tips for Learning Language at Home

How parents respond to their child's efforts to communicate is very important. Children learn best when they are encouraged to try and praised when they succeed. When parents accept their child's attempts to speak, the child wants to keep trying. To improve, the child must keep talking!

It is especially important for children having difficulty with language to have good experiences while learning. These tips can help parents respond to their child in positive ways. This approach can encourage learning, boost self-confidence, and make the learning experience fun for everyone.

1. Be an active listener.

Let your child know that you are listening. Show your sincere interest. Get down to the child's eye level and look at the child. Listen to the child's tone of voice. Notice the expressions of the child's face, body, and hands. These will all be clues to help you understand your child's message. Let your child know that the message is important to you.

Every parent has times when it is impossible to be an active listener. At those times, let your child know that you care, but are just too busy to talk. If possible, tell the child that you would like to talk later. Be sure to follow through on that promise!

2. Let your child talk without interruptions.

Because children are just learning our complex language, it may take them a long time to put their thoughts into words. If your child feels rushed, the child's language attempts may be unsuccessful, resulting in a bad experience. Try to set up family rules about whose turn it is to "take the floor." Let your child finish speaking, even if the child's "turn" is longer than other family members'.

3. Reward your child's speech attempts.

Reward your child's attempts to speak even if you don't understand everything the child says. Express your approval. You can give these rewards, or *reinforcement*, in several ways, including:

- *Physical*—Smile, hug, kiss, touch
- *Verbal*—"Good!"; "I like that!"; "Nice talking!"; "I like the way you use that new word."
- *Natural consequences*—An appropriate action in response to your child's speech attempt, such as:

Child: "Ju!"

Parent: "You want juice!" as you give the child juice.

4. If you don't understand your child, help the child communicate more clearly:

- Smile, don't frown. A frown may give your child the impression you are unhappy or angry.
- Acknowledge your child's speech attempts and frustration at not being understood. You might say, "I know you are trying to tell me something. Sometimes it's hard."
- Try to understand one word of your child's remark. Use that word to ask the child to try again: "Tell me about the *doggie*."
- If you continue to have difficulty understanding, ask your child to *show* you. Have your child *point* to what the child is talking about. Ask yes/no questions. For example, "Do you want juice? Do you want milk?"

5. Give your child enough time to respond to you.

Children with language problems often need extra time to process what you say. You should not assume that your child will be ready to respond as soon as you finish talking. If the child is unable to respond, repeat your remark. The child may need to hear it again to fully understand the meaning. It will take a lot of patience on your part to wait and repeat if necessary. But it will improve your daily communications with your child.

6. When your child makes a sound or word error, use *feedback*.

Child: "Look, Daddy's tar!"

Parent #1: "No, not tar. That's not right. Say car."

Parent #2: "That's Daddy's car. We can ride in his car."

Parent #1 is "correcting." Parent #2 is using feedback. Feedback, as used here, means giving the correct use of your child's error sound or word. All you are doing is giving your child a chance to hear the correct form. It is not necessary to ask your child to repeat the corrected form. In time, your child will probably begin to repeat the correct speech after you without being asked to do so. This allows you to avoid "correcting" your child's speech and language. Nobody likes to be corrected! Your child needs to associate language development with good experiences. Parent #2 had the right idea. Try using feedback with your child. You will probably be pleased with the results.

7. Decrease the pressure placed on your child to talk.

Placing too much pressure on your child to talk can result in a frustrating experience for both of you. Try to keep talking fun!

- *Limit the number of activities to be done at one time.* It may be too difficult for your child to play with toys and talk at the same time. The television or radio may be too much of a distraction.
- *Avoid making your child "perform" in front of others.* Many adults find it difficult to talk in front of other people. Children often feel the same way, especially those who are having difficulty learning language. If you want your child to show Grandpa how the child can count, count *together*. Make the experience fun for everyone.

8. Discourage the use of "bad" words by encouraging other types of expression.

All children developing language go through phases of using "naughty" words. Young children may have no idea what the words mean. But, they *do* know that they can be used to shock people and get attention! Although you want to encourage your *language impaired* child to talk, you also want to limit the use of inappropriate words. How? Probably the best response is to avoid acting shocked. That is exactly the response the child is expecting! Just tell your child that people don't like those words and you don't want to hear them.

Some children may have learned a "bad" word to express anger, frustration, or disappointment. It is important to let your child know that you understand the child's feelings. Then attempt to teach the child another way of expressing emotions. Your child might hit a pillow when mad or say acceptable words like "no!"; "not happy!"; or just "mad." This way, you are accepting your child's feelings *and* language attempts. And you are suggesting other words or actions can be used instead of "bad" words.

9. Know what to expect of your child.

Help your child communicate within the range of the child's ability. Get clear, specific information from your *speech and language clinician* about what to expect from your child. If you have a good idea what your child can and cannot do, you will not demand too much—or accept less. Knowing this information will save frustration for both you and your child.

You can have a tremendous influence on your child's language development. It takes time, patience and a real effort on your part. But the rewards will be worth it—for both you and your child!

Vocabulary

Feedback—Information about correctness/incorrectness of speech allows the speaker to correct mistakes.

Language impairment—Any difficulty expressing or understanding language.

Reinforce—To reward desired behavior.

Speech and language clinician—A person who is qualified to diagnose and treat speech, language, and voice disorders.

Refer to:

6.1.1 Asking Questions

6.1.2 Giving Directions to Your Child

6.1.4 Simplify Your Language to Help Your Child Understand

Help Your Child Learn to Speak Clearly

by Elizabeth M. Prather, Ph.D.

Parents play a key role in the development of their child's speech and language skills. Many parents want to help their child but are not sure exactly what to do. One of the most common questions parents ask speech and language professionals is:

How can I help my child to learn to speak clearly?

1. Expect errors.

All children, and adults too, make some errors in *articulation*—how they make speech sounds. In fact, children normally take seven to eight years to learn to say all of our English sounds correctly!

2. Honesty pays.

Be honest when you do not understand what your child says. Admit that you do not understand. Ask the child to tell you again. Or say, "Show me what you are talking about."

Don't pretend that you understand by saying, "That's nice" or "Yes, that's right." You won't be fooling anyone! Your child will probably think that you are just not interested. Your child may stop talking to you, become angry, or cry.

When you understand part of your child's remark, let the child know. For example, "You are talking about the dog. What did she do?"

3. Be a good listener.

Listen to what your child is trying to tell you, not how it is said. Ignore your child's errors. Correcting errors, instead of responding to the message, can undermine your child's confidence as a speaker.

To improve, your child must keep talking! If you constantly correct pronunciation errors, your child may begin to speak less and less. As a general rule, never force your child to repeat a remark you have understood. You want talking to be a good experience.

4. Ignore mistakes.

When people laugh at pronunciation errors, your child feels angry and frustrated. Teasing hurts a child's feelings and never improves speech. Ask

family members to be kind and ignore your child's mistakes. Don't imitate the child's "baby talk." Use correct speech that your child can imitate.

5. Model good speech.

When your child makes errors, repeat the child's message correctly. But don't ask the child to repeat after you. Children learn by listening. They need to listen to good speech. For example, your child might say, "I tan't fit dis wid" for "I can't fix this lid." You could repeat and *model* as follows: "You can't fix this lid? Maybe I can fix it." You are providing a model of correct speech for your child to hear and imitate. Speak clearly and slowly.

Your examples or models of correct speech help your child in two ways. First, your child knows that you understood. Your child feels successful because you "got the message." Second, your correct speech helps your child learn to speak more clearly. You have not criticized your child or called attention to errors. Yet you have given the child a chance to hear correct speech.

In time, your child will probably begin to correct errors by repeating back your models. Self-correction will be spontaneous, not forced by your demands to "say it" again and again.

6. Fight ear infections.

Good hearing is necessary for the development of normal articulation. Ear infections can cause hearing losses. Children learn language by hearing it. If your child has even mild or temporary hearing losses during the preschool years, speech and language development may be delayed.

Tugging on the ears, congestion, runny nose, or turning up the TV volume are signs of a possible ear infection. Children do not always tell you when they have ear problems. Sometimes they don't even run a fever. When you suspect that your child has an ear infection or that the child's ears are "plugged," see your family physician.

Even mild hearing losses may prevent children from hearing the difference between certain *consonant* sounds. This makes many different words sound the same. For example, a child with

Reasons for Delayed Speech Development

by Elizabeth M. Prather, Ph.D.

What is the cause of your child's speech problem?

Finding the exact cause or causes of your child's speech problem can be difficult. Each child's speech is influenced by many factors, including the ability to hear, the physical development of the mouth and throat, and the abilities the child inherits. The most common causes of delayed speech development are:

1. Hearing Loss

One major cause of delayed speech is hearing loss. Even mild and temporary losses, caused by ear infections or *allergies*, can slow a child's development. Children learn to speak by hearing others speak. When they do not hear speech correctly, they cannot learn to talk correctly. For example, the words "cat," "hat," "sat," "fat," "that," "pat," "bat," and "chat" may all sound the same to a hearing impaired child. If your child's speech is delayed, see an *audiologist* (a specialist in testing hearing).

2. Mouth Deformities

Deformities, or physical defects, in the mouth can cause speech problems. Children born with *cleft palates* or other mouth deformities need special help and medical attention. Fortunately, structural problems bad enough to affect a child's speech are very rare.

3. Mouth Movements

Many children with delayed speech development have trouble learning to move their lips, tongue, and jaws properly. Just as some children walk, run, and play ball awkwardly, some children cannot control their mouth movements as well as others. A few of these children may not chew their food well, and may sometimes choke when they swallow. Some children drool because they have trouble swallowing. Your *speech and language clinician* can help you learn more about your child's mouth movements during speech.

4. Language Delay

Children may have difficulty learning the meaning of words and how to use words in sentences. This language delay will cause speech

problems as well. Learning to talk is very complicated. It includes learning:

- The meaning and use of words
- How to combine words into phrases and sentences
- How to produce the speech sounds
- Combining sounds to say words and sentences

Some children have difficulty learning the rules for combining speech sounds. Errors like "pasghetti" for "spaghetti" are made by a child who knows how to say sounds, but does not know where the sounds belong in words.

Have you ever tried to learn a foreign language? It is very difficult to master a new language. Yet, we expect children to learn our language in an incredibly short period of time! It is not surprising that some children need extra time or special help.

5. Language Disorders

Sometimes speech problems are part of a more serious language disorder. The speech problem is considered less important than the language problem. First, the child needs help to understand and express ideas. Later the child can learn to say sounds correctly. Usually, as the child learns language, speech also becomes clearer. Speech and language clinicians can help these children improve both language and speech skills.

6. Genetic Inheritance

It is common for late speech development to run in families. One or both parents, or any number of aunts and uncles, may have had speech problems when they were young. But children with slow speech development do not always have parents who had the same problem. And parents who had speech problems will not necessarily "pass them on" to all of their children. *Genetic inheritance* is a strong, but not inevitable, factor in late speech development.

7. Bad Speech Habits

Many actions, including walking and talking, become automatic with time and practice. Sometimes when children are beginning to speak, they say sounds incorrectly. If a child

repeats an incorrect pattern long enough, it may become automatic—a bad habit! A child may say the word “school” correctly. Then, a few minutes later, the child will say “tool” in a spontaneous remark. You may also find that your child repeats your speech incorrectly, but does not realize it. These are all examples of bad speech habits.

Summary

These factors are the most common causes of delayed speech development. Usually a child's speech has been affected by a combination of these problems, not just one. The earlier a problem is detected, the earlier it can be treated and the less effect it will have on your child.

If you have any questions about your child's speech or language development, ask a speech and language clinician. The clinician will help you identify the factors that may be causing your child's problems. Early detection and treatment will save time and money. But, more important, your child will be saved from years of possible frustration, learning difficulties, and emotional problems.

Vocabulary

Allergy—An extreme sensitivity to a normally harmless substance, causing physical discomfort.

Audiologist—A specialist in testing hearing.

Cleft palate—An opening or split in the roof of the mouth.

Deformity—A physical abnormality or defect.

Genetic inheritance—A trait passed on from parent to child.

Language disorder—Any difficulty in understanding and using language.

Speech and language clinician—A person who is qualified to diagnose and treat speech, language, and voice disorders.

Refer to:

6.5.1 Developmental Dysarthria

6.5.2 Developmental Apraxia

6.5.4 Help Your Child Develop Feeding Skills

10.2.4 Otitis Media and Speech and Language Development

10.3.6 Cleft Lip and Palate: Effects on Speech, Language and Development

hearing problems may hear "beat," "be," "bean," "beef," "bead," "beep," "beast," and "beak" as the same word!

It is very important to talk clearly and use simple, short sentences when you suspect your child is having hearing problems. Get your child's attention before you speak. Minimize distractions and background noise including radio and television.

7. Be a "good speech" partner.

Many parents worry about their child learning incorrect speech by listening to a friend or family member with a speech problem. But when most of the child's speaking partners use normal speech, the child usually develops normal speech, too.

You do need to be concerned and take action when your child hears many poor speakers. Try to increase the amount of time your child hears "good speech." Perhaps you can spend more time with your child. Or, you may just do more talking when you are together. You may not be able to keep your child from hearing poor speakers. But you can increase your child's time spent with good speakers.

Vocabulary

Articulation—The production of speech sounds.

Consonants—The sounds made by stopping or restricting the outgoing breath.

Model—To provide an example of good speech or other behavior; to demonstrate a desired response.

For more information:

Pushaw, David R. 1976. *Teach your child to talk*. New York, NY: Dantree Press.

Refer to:

- 2.2 Speech Development
- 6.2.1 Reasons for Delayed Speech Development
- 6.2.3 Learning Speech Sounds Through Listening
- 6.2.4 Help Your Child Learn Speech Sounds at Home
- 10.2.4 Otitis Media and Speech and Language Development

Help Your Child Learn Speech Sounds at Home

by Leslie S. McColgin

You can help your child learn speech sounds correctly at a very early age. If your child is beginning to use words or short sentences, you can help your child pronounce words better. Follow these six steps of learning pronunciation:

1. Make a list of words your child uses frequently.

Also include thoughts and feelings that your child often expresses nonverbally. For a child who screams when something is taken away, words like "don't" and "mine" are useful words to learn. Here is a sample list of meaningful words for a preschooler:

Protection Words	Attention Words	Refusal/Acceptance Words
don't	look	no
stop	watch	yes
quit	hey	want
help	more	

Bathroom Words	Personal Words	Body Parts
bathroom	child's name	eye
potty	me/I	mouth
wash	child's age	teeth
brush	boy	nose
comb	girl	ear

Social Words	Location Words	Action Words
please	there	push/pull
thank you	this	hit
okay	that	go
fine	here	run/walk
hi/bye	up	climb

Family Words	Emotion Words	Preschool Words
siblings' names	love	play
pets' names	mad	cup/spoon
favorite foods	like	juice/milk/cookie
sister/brother	sleepy	truck/book/ball
mommy/daddy	happy	doll/block/bike
baby	hungry	scissors

2. Choose five words from the list that your child does not pronounce correctly.

Say them to your child at least twice a day and once at bedtime. If possible, get pictures or objects representing the words. Point to the corresponding picture or object as you say each word. If you cannot use pictures or objects, set up situations where the word can be used many times. Incorporate these five words into a bedtime story for your child. Use the words as many times as possible.

3. After a week or two of saying the five words, ask your child to name an object or picture after you name one.

You may want to stretch out any sound the child is having trouble with. Or, say the difficult sound louder than the other sounds in the word. If your child doesn't say the word correctly, try not to respond negatively. Encourage your child to say the word without correcting. Don't let your child get frustrated. If the child continues to have trouble getting the sound, go on to another word or activity. Perhaps the child needs another week or two of listening to the sound.

4. It is very important to work on only one sound at a time in each word.

If the child says "wub" for "love," don't try to correct the "l" and the "v" at the same time. Start by accepting correct production of one sound. For example, "wuv."

5. When your child can say the five new words after you, ask the child to name the pictures or objects without hearing you say the names first.

Deliberately misunderstand your child if a word is said incorrectly. This shows the child that the way a word is said can make a difference in meaning. Praise correct pronunciation. This helps your child be aware of correct pronunciation when it occurs.

6. Once your child can say a word without needing to hear you say it first, put the related picture on the refrigerator or household bulletin board.

This can be done for each word as it is learned. Make a family "rule" that the child must use

Learning Speech Sounds Through Listening

by Leslie S. McColgin

Is your child having trouble pronouncing words well enough to be understood? If so, your child needs extra practice listening to speech sounds. To ask the child to say the correct sounds may be starting with too difficult a task. Any child who has a speech problem, for whatever reason, needs more practice and opportunities for listening.

The following are ways to give your child opportunities to listen to correct speech sounds:

1. Exaggerate your child's problem sounds in your own speech.

Pick one or two sounds to emphasize. Make the sound longer, as in "hous-s-s-se," or louder, as in "hot" or "pie." If your child says the sound correctly, praise the child. Then, give the child a chance to listen to the sound again. If the word is pronounced incorrectly, DO NOT correct the child. Say, "Yes, this is a hous-s-s-se" even though it may have been incorrectly called a "hout."

2. Collect ten pictures of simple things whose names contain the chosen sound(s).

Say the ten words to your child three times a day, including bedtime. Show your child a picture and name it, remembering to exaggerate the chosen sound. Emphasize one sound at a time. Use the same pictures and words for about a week. Then choose ten new ones. Perhaps you can use the pictures and words to tell a bedtime story. DO NOT correct if your child imitates the words incorrectly. At this point, you want the child to be listening to the sounds rather than making them.

3. Also collect pictures whose names do not contain the target sound.

Mix up the pictures with and without the target sound. Then, name each picture. Ask each time if the child hears the target sound. For example, "Do you hear the s-s-s sound in this word?" If the child does not answer correctly, simply give the correct answer. For example, "Yes, there is an s-s-s in housse." If the picture does contain the sound, have the child put that picture in a "Speech Book." Later, your child can use the speech book to practice the target sound.

4. Have your child play "Gotcha!"

Say the words that go with the pictures, sometimes correctly and sometimes incorrectly. Ask your child to say "Gotcha!" when you say a word wrong. If your child can tell you the correct way to say the word, praise the child. Remember not to correct if the child pronounces a word incorrectly. If the child does not identify an incorrect word say, "Whoops, I said that wrong. I said _____ instead of _____." Concentrate on giving the child opportunities to listen.

Summary

You can use these suggestions to give your child additional chances to hear speech sounds. You are asked not to correct your child's pronunciation at this point because your child may not be ready to use certain sounds. Your child's speech clinician can advise you when it is time to use a new sound. Most children learn to say a sound alone, then in syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. Then they begin to use the sound in conversation.

Choose activities your child enjoys. Continue each activity for only as long as your child is willing to participate. Help your child learn that listening and talking can be fun. It is very important that the child does not begin to associate "speech" and "talking" with feeling bad or frustrated.

Refer to:

2.2 Speech Development

6.2.1 Reasons for Delayed Speech Development

6.2.2 Help Your Child Learn to Speak Clearly

6.2.4 Help Your Child Learn Speech Sounds at Home



the word in five appropriate situations every day. Try to think of special ways to reward the child's progress if five correct productions are made in a day.

Now you can start over with five new words, or teach another sound in a word you've just worked on. Give your child frequent opportunities to listen to the words. When the child is

imitating the words correctly, supply lots of opportunities to use them.

Refer to:

2.2 Speech Development

6.2.1 Reasons for Delayed Speech Development

6.2.2 Help Your Child Learn to Speak Clearly

6.2.3 Learning Speech Sounds Through Listening

Developing Responsibility

by Judith M. Creighton, Ph.D.

Do you want your child to be more responsible about chores and self-care? Most parents wish children helped more often, more cheerfully, and more dependably. A child with speech, language, or hearing problems needs extra guidance and direction. You can help your child learn to be more responsible. At the same time, you will help your child gain self-respect and respect for others.

Your child can learn to be a helper.

Being responsible at home and school develops over time. At first children may be more a nuisance than a help! They love to try challenging things with risky outcomes. A two-year-old may want to try vacuuming. If you guide your child in the activity, the child's skill will develop. The child may not be able to vacuum the carpet as well as you can until age nine or ten. Then, having learned everything about vacuuming, the child may no longer think it's fun. But, at nine or ten, the child may be ready to choose it as a regular chore.

A four-year-old may love to "wash" the dishes. Allow it, but expect to check the dishes afterward. Quietly finish the job yourself. By age seven or eight, when your child has the skill to do a good job, the child will think of it as a chore. So, you will need to reward your child for doing chores well enough to be of some real help. One reward is to invite your child to work along with you. This way, the job will be more fun. It's also a good way to teach and answer questions about shared activities.

Help your child express feelings about responsibility.

While learning to be responsible, a child with language or hearing problems needs help in expressing feelings. Observe your child's body closely. Try to describe in words what you think the child may be feeling. The feeling words come very slowly to children with hearing problems. These children may change rapidly from distress to an all-out tantrum. If your child has this problem, reading body language can help you learn to avoid angry outbursts. Your child may look tense before doing a chore. You can help by gently rubbing your hand across your child's

shoulders and upper back. This says, "I know how you feel." Accompany it with the words. Your child may not understand the words. But the child will pick up something from your body language and voice tone.

Expect children to help but don't require cheerfulness. Chores interrupt free time and self-selected activities. Choose appropriate responsibilities for your child. Here is a list of reasonable responsibilities for several age groups:

18-24 months

- Taking off shoes, socks, and other garments except over-the-head shirts.
- Putting dirty clothes in the hamper.
- Bringing shoes to be put on.

2-3 years

- Washing and drying hands.
- Brushing teeth with some help.
- Hanging up or stowing pajamas.
- Putting knives, forks, and spoons around at the table, with on-going instructions.
- Clearing off the child's own unbreakable plate, silver, and empty cup.
- Putting play materials away. The child who can get a toy can return it to its place. No new toy should be taken out before the last-used toy is put away. Exception: A child who gets involved in elaborate play sometimes wants a construction to be left in place for awhile. Offer matter-of-fact help for putting away a large project.
- Coming to meals on time. Give five- to ten-minute warnings for when to start picking up. Use a timer which your child can see and hear. If your child comes at the appropriate time, let the child make first choice from the desserts or give some other reward. If your child delays, start without the child. If the food is gone when your child arrives, do not offer food until the next meal. Don't be punitive about this. But be consistent.

4 years

- Helping to make the child's own bed.
- Helping clear the table and do the dishes.

- Dusting.
- Dressing self — may need supervision.

5 years

- Making the child's own bed (if it is out from the wall on both sides and you are tolerant of lots of wrinkles).
- Helping with yard work.
- Folding clothes.
- Taking out garbage
- Answering the phone.

6 years

- Feeding and walking a pet.
- Doing the child's own homework, from the first assignment.
- Folding the child's own clean undergarments.
- Hanging clothes in the closet.
- Tying own shoes.
- Peeling potatoes and other kitchen help.

Assign home responsibilities during a family meeting.

Try an all-family discussion of what chores need to be done. The child can help identify the tasks. Ask who would like to take responsibility for each task. Help the child decide how much time is needed to complete each chore. Agree on what standards must be met to complete a chore. Then, help your child to keep a record of when the chores are done.

Keep records for all the family's chores on the same sheet. Make an event of marking off when you do a task. Notice when your child marks off a chore and act pleased.

Hang in there! Children sense when they are helping to keep family life running smoothly. When you praise your child's efforts, the child will feel capable and proud.

What if chores are not done?

If your child's chore isn't done on time, have an agreed-on reminder. A visual reminder is good, such as bringing the child the spoon used to feed the dog. Be sure you both agree ahead of time on the reminder and the expected immediate action. A visual cue is better responded to than a verbal reminder.

Why must you plan for dealing with failure? Chores can be dull. They take physical effort. There are decisions to be made. (Can I get trash from all the wastebaskets into the kitchen

wastebasket? Can I get it to the trash can without spilling?) Decisions don't always work well for the decider. Poor decisions can result in angry parents, doubled work to do, broken things, overlooked dirty spots, work that has taken twice as long as expected, and so on. Your child is learning many things by trial and error:

- How to estimate the amount of time needed to do a task
- The sequence of steps involved
- The materials to be gathered before starting
- The messiness of some jobs
- How to prevent accidents

Here are some ways to deal with your child when behavior needs to be corrected:

1. Learners sometimes get discouraged.

It's good to help with decisions. You may see your three-year-old hauling a rocking chair over to the front window, rag and glass cleaner in hand. You could just tell the child to stop. Or, you can do some teaching instead. "You can clean this part of the window, down here. That way, you can stand safely on the floor."

2. A child who can do a task without help may not always follow through on the task.

What can parents do to correct the behavior? *Tailor the "punishment" to fit the "crime"* A child who hasn't emptied the trash may be required to do so before eating supper, or watching a favorite TV show, or going next door to play with a friend. That's reasonable and the child can understand. Avoid grounding, allowance cutting, scolding, or sermons.

3. Continue to accept your child while correcting behavior.

A child who is called lazy, selfish, and forgetful has very little reason to act responsibly. Instead, the child will begin to act out these unwanted qualities more and more. Soon, the names the child has been called will fit.

4. Avoid listening to excuses.

Always come back to the issue. Be firm but friendly: "I expect you to _____. You haven't done it yet. So you must do it now before you _____. As soon as your job is done you may _____."

5. Refuse to hear complaints.

Stay calm. Don't negotiate.

The child who acts as if a chore is done when it isn't is not practicing to be a professional liar.

The child just doesn't want to be scolded or punished for failure. You can't allow regular

chore-ducking. But if your child is acting this way, look to your own behavior. Do you get visibly angry every time a chore hasn't been done? Do you often call out, "Get the wastebaskets!" just as your ten-year-old dashes off to play baseball? Better timing can improve things.

Soon you and your child will come to an understanding about responsibilities. Your patience and guidance will pay off in mutual respect. The time you save by sharing responsibilities can be happily spent in fun activities with your child.

Refer to:

- 6.1.2 Giving Directions to Your Child
- 6.1.3 How You Talk With Your Child is Important!
- 9.2 Dealing With Frustration
- 9.3 Talking About Your Child's Feelings and Behavior
- 9.4 Dealing With Negative Behavior



Dealing with Frustration

by Judith M. Creighton, Ph.D.

Introduction

Frustration is the angry feeling that develops when we can't have what we want. Everyone knows what it's like to be frustrated. Children with speech and language problems are often frustrated.

It's not easy to deal with your child's anger and frustration. But your child needs your guidance about what to do with angry feelings. The best time to talk with your child about how to deal with anger is when you are both feeling friendly. Try the following methods to help your child learn to manage anger and frustration.

Share your ways of dealing with anger.

First, your child needs to know that you get angry, too. Explain what you do to keep from showing anger in dangerous or foolish ways. Start by talking about the last time you felt frustrated. Tell what you wanted to have happen, what did (or did NOT) happen, and how you felt. Bring up the issue of your child's anger carefully and matter-of-factly. Ask your child to talk about the last time the child felt angry. What did your child want to have happen? What did happen? How did your child feel? How was the feeling expressed?

Try to help your child identify successful and not-so-successful ways of expressing anger. Be honest about your own anger. It really helps children to know that their parents are not perfect. Also try to help your child recognize the kinds of situations which are likely to cause anger. Point out how you prepare for difficult situations. Talk about the times when your child handled problems without getting angry. What did your child do to "keep cool?"

Help your child learn control words.

A child with speech and language disabilities is often made to feel like a second-class communicator. People may consider your child babyish, stubborn, or stupid for "not getting the idea." Other children can be particularly cruel. They are more likely than adults to deliberately shame or avoid your child.

Your child needs to practice some control words until they are known very well. Some of these are: "Stop!" "Wait!" "My turn!" or "Me, too!" If your child can't form these words, find other ways to express the message. A simple "No" with some gestures may do the trick.

Your child also needs to have some social words ready. In order of importance, these may be: "Thank you." "I like you." "I don't like it." "This is fun."

Provide opportunities for successful play with other children.

Speech and language delayed children need good humor, persistence, AND some play materials which other children enjoy. Show your child and describe in words the meaning of good humor and persistence. Find play materials for your child that don't require a lot of language for successful use. Tell other children that your child is trying very hard to be a friend. Make your house and outdoor play area inviting so children will come into your child's territory. You can be nearby to help resolve problems.

Help your child prepare for possible frustrating interactions.

Adults who interact with your child can create more complicated problems. Few adults would openly admit to negative feelings about a child with a disability. But, many adults are short-tempered with such children. Some adults tend to talk down to a child with any kind of delay. Finally, some adults are cruel but will say, "I didn't mean it" or "I was just kidding" if you challenge their behavior.

Be sure to share and talk about good times, too. It's not necessary to dwell on anger and frustration. (Your child might decide that being angry is the best way to get your attention.)

Help your child learn acceptable ways to deal with frustration:

1. Use words, rather than actions, to express your anger.
2. If one way of doing something doesn't work, think of another. Or, get help with the problem,

rather than hitting the person or object which is making you angry.

3. If you have a problem, it's all right to cry. But it's not all right to give up on trying to reach your goal.
4. If someone won't do what you want, try to persuade that person that it's important to you. If it's not important to them, trade. (Do something in exchange).
5. If you can't solve a problem, leave it for awhile. Do something else. Or, think about it some more. Then, come back to the problem.

All of these techniques may be standard for adults, but children have to learn them by experience. Your language delayed child is not unique. Talk about which ways of dealing with anger work best. Explain the situations where one technique is better than another. Point out how other people deal successfully with their problems. Try to describe what they are doing. Praise your child when the child deals with anger successfully.

Help your child learn what behavior is not allowed.

For your own survival, you have to have some house rules about expressing frustration. There are some ways of expressing anger that are not allowed. People may not hurt other people or animals. People may not destroy other people's property. (Most children break these rules occasionally, or act as if they're trying to.) Your punishments for infractions should be established with your child ahead of time. For hurting people or trying to, brief banishment from people—a time-out—is best. For hurting others' property, a child should be expected to make some repayment. Depending on the age and ability of the child, an apology should be made.

If you are consistent and use the teaching methods suggested here, you can help your child learn to manage frustration. As your child gets older and more experienced, the child will get better at dealing with frustration. There may also be less frustration as your child progresses in speech and language therapy.

Refer to:

- 9.3 Talking About Your Child's Feelings and Behavior
- 9.4 Dealing With Negative Behavior

Talking About Your Child's Feelings and Behavior

by Linda M. Levine, M.Ed.

Introduction

Chris is a daydreamer. His favorite expression is "in a minute." His parents feel they can't "get through" to him. They yell at him every day but he doesn't change.

Jessie hates her teacher today and never wants to go back to school again. At the dinner table, Jessie spills her milk and refuses to eat. Her behavior irritates her parents. She is sent to her room after a shouting match.

When children are unhappy or angry it influences their behavior. Parents naturally want to direct them and give advice. How this is done makes all the difference. Parents can help their child express feelings without "acting up." Behavior can be improved without hurting your child's feelings. Here are some suggestions to help parents deal with their child's feelings and behavior.

Avoid a power struggle with your child.

Children at any age tend to resist if they feel overpowered or unfairly treated. Even preschoolers are individuals with ideas and feelings of their own. When children feel overpowered by adults, they often wage a "power-struggle" in which they may be stubborn or rebellious.

A cycle of push-pull between children and parents is not easy to live with. When children are unhappy, angry, or acting up, they need help in dealing with their feelings. They need to change their behavior so that resistance to authority does not become the main way in which they react to other people.

Improve communication with your child.

Learning how to talk to children without hurting their feelings can result in better behavior, cooperation, and feelings of self-worth. Helping your child learn to communicate feelings may result in less anger and frustration. The following guidelines may help you and your child develop a good system of communication:

1. Accept the child.

We can accept a child without necessarily approving of the child's behavior. When your child pulls the cat's tail, tell the child firmly that no one may hurt the cat. Then follow up with a demonstration of how to pet the cat, showing it affection. Let the child follow your example. Give immediate encouragement for the good behavior. The child should always be made to feel "O.K." as a person, even though the child's behavior may not always be correct. Your child will know that the action was bad, not the child.

2. Send "I-messages" to communicate your own feelings.

I-messages are statements of fact. They tell your child how the child's behavior makes you feel. I-messages help your child understand that you have feelings, too.

Say: "I need help in picking up the toys."
Instead of: "You sure made a mess."

Say: "I can't understand you with all that screaming."
Instead of: "You better shut up."

Avoid name-calling when you are angry. You might try "I really get upset when I see your clothes all over the floor" instead of "You're such a slob!" An angry attack on a child will produce similar feelings of anger and resentment in the child. This will not solve the problem.

Be sure to share your feelings when your child's behavior pleases you. For example: "I like it when you go to bed on time."

3. Help your child identify feelings.

This will help your child name, understand, and deal with feelings. Your child will know that you understand the problem and care about the child. When you help your child identify negative feelings, those feelings disappear more quickly. For example:

"You are sad because your dog died."

"You are mad at me because I won't let you go outside to play."

"You are pretty worried about that test. You're not sure you'll do well."

If your child is behaving badly due to anger, it is especially helpful to identify the child's feelings. Then, explain what behavior you expect. "I know you are angry at your friend. But you may not hit him."

4. Expand on what your child says.

A good way to get children to talk about their feelings is to repeat what they are saying. Then, expand on the thought.

Child: "Teri is my best friend. But I hate her!"

Parent: "Teri is really your best friend. But for some reason you do not like her right now."

Child: "I don't like her because she's playing with Sandy. They didn't ask me to play!"

Repeating thoughts and adding to them tells your child that you have heard, that you are interested, and that you would like to listen if there is more to tell.

5. Tell what to do, instead of what not to do.

How many times does it take for your child to do as you ask? Putting requests in a positive way helps children know exactly what behavior you would like.

Instead of:	Say:
Don't run.	You need to walk.
Don't touch that.	Look. But, please don't touch.
Don't slam the door.	Close the door quietly, please.

6. Set a good example.

Don't expect your child to show more self-control than you do. Remember, children will imitate adult behavior. If you yell and scream when you feel angry, your child will follow your example.

7. Give your child encouragement.

Avoid nagging and warning. Encouragement shows your faith in your child. Too high a standard for the child invites failure. Too low a standard does not show faith. Encouragement builds a child's feelings of self-worth. Express confidence in the child's ability by saying such things as:

"I know you can handle it."

"I know you'll be able to come up with a way to solve this one."

By using these communication tips, you can help your child express feelings and maintain good behavior.

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Refer to:

9.2 Dealing With Frustration

9.4 Dealing With Negative Behavior

Dealing With Negative Behavior

by Linda M. Levine, M.Ed.

Introduction

As a parent, one of your most challenging jobs is guiding your children. The job seems easy when your children are cooperative and happy. It is not so easy when they have temper tantrums or refuse to pick up their toys! Most children are not well behaved all of the time.

Parents need to be consistent when they try to help their children understand what is expected of them. Young children lack self control. They slowly improve in behavior as they learn what is expected at home, in school, and in public.

All children act up at times. But it is considered a problem when children constantly tease, show little consideration for others, are rough with toys, pets or furniture, or do things which annoy and upset family members. It is said that these children lack discipline. Too often parents try to solve the problem with a system of rewards and punishments.

Using Discipline

Some parents think discipline means punishment. But discipline is really teaching children the rules for living. A parent's job is to set up firm rules for children and be consistent in applying them. *The goal of discipline is teaching children respect for rules, for property, for others, and for themselves.*

When children are young, the rules are simple: "Don't touch the hot stove," "It's time to go now," and "Stay near me in the store." As children get older, the rules become more complicated and children develop a "mind of their own." Parents often lose patience at this stage.

When parents make the effort to train children when they are young, family life can be much easier later on. If discipline is just a series of rewards and punishments, of overpowering children because you are older and bigger, then problems may develop. When the children get older, they may no longer feel they have to listen to you. Power works with young children as a temporary measure. But it does not help children change the way they behave over the long run.

Why do children misbehave?

You might ask why children act the way they do. It is a combination of experimentation, natural curiosity, and immaturity. All children are concerned mostly about themselves until they are taught otherwise. They don't think about what will happen next. They sometimes misbehave because they want attention, or are trying to show parents that they too can be powerful. They sometimes misbehave because they are angry at having been spanked or punished.

Parents often give in to the demands of children because they think this makes children feel loved and wanted. Parents can show the most respect for children by gently and firmly insisting that the rules be followed. Parents often allow a child's unruly behavior to go on too long. The parents become angry and the child receives a spanking. Children imitate their parents. This type of behavior teaches them that it is all right to shout and hit when they are angry.

Tips for Parents

Here are some tips to help you teach children good behavior—and to help avoid misbehavior.

Pre-Toddlers and Toddlers

As soon as babies begin to crawl (eight or nine months) and explore their world, parents can begin to use some of the following suggestions:

- *Trade*—Substitute another toy or object for the one the child should not be playing with.
- *Take action*—Tell the child "no" only one time, and then start moving in the direction of the child. Children know how many times you will call their names before you get serious enough to start moving towards them.
- *Distract*—Anticipate situations that might cause problems. Distract the child's attention to something else.
- *Change the environment*—Don't expect your child to act like an adult. If you are going to the doctor's office, provide some toys to play with while you are waiting. If you don't want your child to break valuables on the coffee table, remove them until the child is old enough to understand. It is

often more efficient to change the environment than to change the child.

Pre-School to Junior High School

As children mature, there are additional ways to help encourage good behavior. These methods are good for children ages two to eleven.

- *Praise good behavior*—One of the most effective ways you can encourage good behavior is by using praise. Parents often take the good things children do for granted and only catch them being naughty! Be on the lookout for good behavior. Remember to offer praise (even for attempts). Your child will try to please you more often by doing the things that will make you happy.
- *Reward behavior you want to see repeated*—Rewards can be as simple as telling the child you like whatever the child is doing. Or, you can give hugs and kisses. Older elementary children may respond to additional rewards such as stickers or a special outing.
- *Let your child know what behavior is unacceptable*—If a child is not behaving according to your rules, do something about it right away. Take the time to stop the car, stop your shopping, or whatever else you are doing. Then help the child understand what is acceptable behavior—and what is not.
- *Try different methods of discipline other than punishment*—Punishment is the least-effective long-term type of discipline. If you can change the behavior of your child in a positive way, it will have a much more long-lasting effect.

Time-Out

What can parents do when negative behaviors occur? **Time-Out** is a good way to help children understand which behaviors are acceptable and which are not:

First, ask your child to stop the unacceptable behavior. If the child doesn't stop, say "You have decided to have **Time-Out**." Remove the child from the situation. Don't talk or pay attention to the child. After an appropriate time, lead your child back to the activity. Do not remark on the **Time-Out** situation.

Younger children (three to five) should receive **Time-Out** for just a minute or two. Older

children can be sent away from the situation. They may return when they decide that they can behave properly. It will help your child develop good feelings of self-worth to come back to the problem situation and handle it well. **Time-Out** allows your child to change behavior without being labeled a "bad child."

When you combine **Time-Out** with a reward system, you will help your child maintain good behavior.

Summary

The example you set for your child is the best discipline of all. If you want your child to become a responsible person who exercises self-control, then your actions are the most powerful way of teaching. You need to set the rules at first. But, eventually your good example will help your child understand the reasons behind the rules. At this point, your child will truly gain self-respect and respect for others.

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Refer to:

- 9.1 Developing Responsibility
- 9.2 Dealing With Frustration
- 9.3 Talking About Your Child's Feelings and Behavior

Help Your Child Use Gesture to Communicate

by Carolyn A. Weiner, M.A., C.C.C.

What is gesture?

Gesture is the movement of any part of the body for the purpose of communication. Gesturing may take many forms. It may include pointing to things, pushing things away, or pulling people where one wants them to go. Gestures include facial expressions such as smiles or frowns to communicate likes and dislikes. Although gesturing may be easily understood, it is not a formal method of communication such as sign language.

How is gesturing related to communication development?

The ability to use gestures marks an important step in the development of communication skills. A child who can signal likes, dislikes, and requests by gesturing can be an active communicator in the family or classroom. When your child is able to gesture, the child has mastered a number of skills, including:

- Recognition of people in the environment
- The ability to understand the meanings of specific actions (such as going to the kitchen, going to the door, picking up a pencil)
- The ability to understand the basic rules of communication ("I want something. I ask for it. I either get it or I'm told 'no.'")

A child who is not yet gesturing is said to be at the "pre-gestural" level. At this stage, the child does not try to communicate. Any communication depends on the ability of people around the child to figure out what the child may need. An example of pre-gestural communication is crying. A child's crying is an automatic response to discomfort. But, people around the child respond as if the child were calling for help. Each time the child cries someone comes to help. Over time, the child begins to connect crying with someone coming. Eventually, the child will learn to cry or to call on purpose to get someone's attention. At this point, gestural communication has begun. Further examples of pre-gestural and gestural communication behavior can be found in the chart below. Look at this chart to determine at what level your child is communicating.

You can help your child learn to communicate with gestures.

Most parents teach gestural communication to their children unconsciously by attending to cries, facial grimaces, gazes, and squirming as though these actions were intentional communication. If your child is not yet using gestures, you can teach them by using the following tips for parents:

1. Act as though your child's behaviors are an attempt to communicate. If your child looks toward the window, say, "Would you like to be closer to the window? O.K." Then move your child or help the child move toward the window. If your child frowns during feeding, say, "You don't like it?"
2. When possible, respond to your child's behavior by changing your actions. If your child squints at a light, say, "Too bright?" and move the light. If your child looks at a stuffed animal, say, "You want this?" and bring it to the child.
3. When you communicate with your child, use gestures as well as words. For example, wave when you say "hi" and "good bye." Reach for things when you say "Give to me." Shake your head and frown when you say "no-no."
4. When appropriate, help your child form and use a gesture. Your child may frown in response to a music box. Help the child push it away. Say, "No music box."

Summary

The chart below offers some specific gestures that you can help your child to learn. The first column on the chart describes pre-gestural behavior. This is probably what your child is doing now. The second column gives the related gestural behavior you can help your child to learn. You may need to place your child's hands in the gesture desired. Show your child an appropriate gesture and encourage the child to imitate it.

Refer to:

- 2.1 Language Development
- 3.1 Infant Stimulation
- 7.2 Sign Language, Speech Development, and Your Child

Pre-Gestural and Gestural Communication

Pre-gestural

1. Allows head to be turned to see an object.
2. Watches someone cause objects to do things, such as winding up a music box.
3. Responds negatively to sounds, sights, actions, objects, food, etc.
4. Attends to objects that make noise.
5. Allows someone to move hand to grasp objects.
6. Shows signs of stress during activity.
7. Shows signs of pleasure.

Gestural

1. Turns head by self in order to see object.
2. Examines an object. Indicates an interest in making the object work by gesturing a request, or trying to make the object work.
3. Pushes away undesired items.
4. Uses objects to make noise.
5. Reaches for objects.
6. Uses gesture to ask for activity. For example, may reach out to get picked up.
7. Uses gesture to ask for activity to stop. For example, frowns, pushes toys away, moves away from activity.



Sign Language Can Help Your Child

by Sharon Hendrickson, M.S., C.C.C.

What is sign language?

Sign language is a means of communication. People using sign language make movements with their hands to communicate.

How is sign language used in speech therapy?

Sign language is often used with traditional speech therapy as part of a program of total communication. Sign language can help many children learn to talk. It is easier to learn new things when we are shown as well as told. A child can see an adult sign the name of an object or action while hearing the corresponding word. This helps the child understand and remember the word and its meaning. The process develops listening skills and visual attention. Both skills are important in the development of spoken language.

Signing helps the child learn a word's meaning and how to communicate it effectively. Many children who begin to communicate by signing soon learn to say the corresponding words. Then they learn how to use the words in phrases and sentences.

What are different types of sign language?

The *speech and language clinician* or special teacher working with your child will select a signing system for the child. There are many different systems of signs which vary from country to country. For instance, you may read or hear terms such as "ASL" (American Sign Language) or "SE" (Signed English).

In general, ASL is often used with children who are just beginning to develop communication skills. Many programs for preschool-level children with communication problems tend to use ASL. SE is a system of signs which more closely correspond to written English. It includes signs for many language forms including plurals and different kinds of verb forms. Programs for school-age children with hearing problems often favor the use of SE or other systems which closely correspond to written English.

How does a signing program work?

1. The first step is to develop a vocabulary which is:

- Meaningful and useful for your child
- Within your child's physical abilities to sign
- Appropriate to your child's learning level

Your speech and language clinician, working with you and your child's teacher, can choose a vocabulary of signs for your child. The following signs are often included in introductory programs:

your child's name	"go"
"eat"	"all done"
"drink"	"Mommy"
"Daddy"	"more"
"bathroom"	"milk"
"car"	"sleep"

names of other family members, pets, and favorite foods

2. The second step is to teach these signs to your child. Teach the meaning of each sign by using it together with the object or action it names. It is helpful to give as many examples of its meaning as possible.

To teach your child the sign for "cat," use the appropriate sign each time the child points to, watches, or approaches a cat. While saying "Look at the cat!" make the sign for cat. Then help your child to make the sign as well. Later on, the same series of steps is used to teach simple phrases.

During speech and language therapy sessions, the clinician may use pictures or sets of toy objects to teach the meaning of signs and to practice their use. As your child masters new signs in therapy, you may be asked to help the child practice them at home.

How can I help my child develop total communication skills?

1. Remember: parents are a child's most important teachers. You are the very special people who help your child use new knowledge in the real world. Take time to practice often with your child. Praise your child's efforts.

2. Know the signs your child is learning and use them frequently while talking.
3. Encourage your child to use signs and words instead of just gesturing.
4. Become familiar with how your child makes different signs so that you will understand what the child is trying to communicate.
5. Encourage your child to make sounds while signing.
6. Accept signs that are not exactly made. Some children will have trouble making some signs.
7. Continue to tell your speech and language clinician what additional signs would be useful for your child to learn.

Summary

Signing can give the communication-handicapped child success in conversing with others. This reduces the frustration that often accompanies speech and language disorders or delays. As a result, social behavior often improves as well. The child who can tell you that the soup is too hot is unlikely to push it over to communicate discomfort. The child who can sign "car" to ask to go for a ride has learned that signs and words can convey information and influence others. Used as part of a total communication approach to speech and language therapy, sign language has helped many children to become successful communicators.

Vocabulary

Speech and language clinician—A person who is qualified to diagnose and treat speech, language, and voice disorders.

Total communication—Use of additional ways of communicating, such as sign language or communication boards, to expand the conversational abilities of the child with severe speech and language disabilities.

For more information:

Ricekehof, L. 1978. *The joy of signing: The new illustrated guide for mastering sign language and the manual alphabet*. Gospel Publishing.

Refer to:

7.1 Help Your Child Use Gesture to Communicate



Augmentative Communication

by Sharon Hendrickson, M.S., C.C.C.

What is augmentative communication?

"Augment" means "to increase." Some people do not have the physical ability to talk well enough to communicate. These people need a way to increase their ability to communicate.

"Augmentative communication" refers to special devices and methods of communication which provide alternatives for spoken language.

We all use alternative methods of communication. People with poor handwriting may use dictating equipment or typewriters. Pictures of seatbelts on car windows remind us to "buckle up." Pictures on restroom doors provide information for persons who are unable to read printed signs.

What types of augmentative communication devices are available?

Augmentative communication devices vary in expense and type of material used. Every individual is unique. Every augmentative communication system must be specially designed to meet the needs of the person who will depend upon it. There are many types of augmentative communication devices. New materials and new devices are rapidly being developed to help people with communication problems.

Communication notebooks and boards are made to show common pictures, and sometimes letters, numbers, and words. To communicate, the person points to the appropriate part of the notebook or board. Specialized electronic devices may provide sound as well as pictures. Various switches enable people to control microcomputers by blowing, sucking, blinking eyes, or making some movement other than touching the keyboard.

What type of augmentative communication device is best for your child?

Augmentative communication devices are usually designed by a team of special education or rehabilitation specialists. An occupational therapist may determine the type of body movement which can best be used. For example, it may be easiest for your child to point to a communication board or use a switch on an electronic device. The *speech and language clinician* will use information provided by parents

and teachers to determine the vocabulary items to use. Together, team members will select an augmentative system which will:

- Allow the individual to communicate most effectively
- Be easiest to operate
- Be most economical while meeting the person's needs

Team members consider many factors in developing an augmentative communication system. These include:

1. Physical ability

Can the person write or operate keys on a typewriter or computer? Can the person point accurately to pictures or printed words? Even head movements or "chin-pointing" can be used to indicate one of just three or four items per page. If the person has this ability, a multi-page communication notebook arranged by topic may be a good choice. Electronic communication devices now on the market can be controlled through finger movements, hand movements, or movement of almost any body part, including eye movements, head movements, or even blowing and sucking.

2. Choice of symbol system

Popular ways of representing words or ideas on a communication board or other augmentative device include pictures, Rebus symbols and, of course, the printed words themselves. For example:

- Pictures (photo or drawing)
- Rebus symbols
- Words

Some electronic systems also store phrases and sentences which may be combined for spoken or printed output.

3. Method of item selection

If a person cannot point or push a button to indicate desired items on a board, a scanning method of item selection will be used. With a manual communication board or notebook, the caregiver points to each item across the surface until the individual indicates that the desired item has been reached. Any movement under the

individual's control may be used as a signal. A two-step scanning procedure may be used with either communication boards or electronic devices. The individual signals when the desired row of items has been indicated. This is done by a pointing helper or by movement of a light along a row of words or other *symbols*. The helper or light begins to indicate items in that row until the communication-impaired individual again signals. This shows the final choice of word or phrase.

Some devices allow an individual to select a series of words or phrases before printing them or repeating them aloud. Using such a sophisticated device, persons with severe communication and physical disabilities may learn to write homework, print letters, and even program computers.

4. Materials available

There are many materials commercially available to construct individualized communication systems. Choice of materials depends on sturdiness, attractiveness, and cost. Electronic devices and systems involving microcomputers are generally more expensive.

5. Method of transportation

Does the device have to be mounted on a wheelchair? Must the device be hand-held?

The Role of Parents

Parents and other family members are people who can "make or break" their child's augmentative communication system. With a simple communication board or a sophisticated computer-based device, it still takes people to send and receive the communication. Parents can help their child by:

- Contributing useful, meaningful items to the system's vocabulary. For instance, one mother asked that her daughter's vocabulary include names of soap operas which the two watched together. Family members, friends, and teachers are more likely to use the communication system for conversation if it includes really interesting things to talk about.
- Using the augmentative communication system creatively. If a person is asked the

same questions day after day, answering those questions will soon become a chore. Talk about your child's preferences; ongoing, past, and future activities; holidays; pets; and other members of the family. If the communication system contains questions or single words like "what," "who," or "where," encourage the person using the system to ask such questions. Many people require extra practice, since they have never before been able to ask questions.

- Providing many opportunities for communication.
- Encouraging your child to use the device to communicate at a comfortable language level. Your child's speech and language clinician will be able to help you do this.

Summary

It is important for communication-impaired persons and their families to remember that we are living in an exciting time. Advances in augmentative communication are occurring every year. Everyone should have assistance in developing and using as much spoken language as possible. Augmentative communication devices may then help to close the gap between the individual's need to communicate and the ability to do so.

Vocabulary

Augmentative communication—Refers to special devices and methods of communication which provide alternatives to spoken language.

Communication notebook or board—An aid for people with speech difficulties, containing pictures or representations of numbers, the alphabet, and commonly used words. The person uses the board to communicate by pointing to the pictures which express the desired message.

Impairment—Physical weakness or damage, or a functional problem.

Symbol—A sign that stands for or represents something else.

Refer to:

- 7.1 Help Your Child Use Gesture to Communicate
- 7.2 Sign Language Can Help Your Child

Reading With Your Child

by Linda M. Levine, M.Ed.

Introduction

Learning how to read is one of the most important areas of language development. Parents often ask teachers, "How can I help my child with reading?" The answer might surprise you. You can help at home even before your child is ready for school.

Experts studied a group of school-age children who were good readers. The good readers had had several things in common when they were of preschool age. They had family members who:

- Read books, magazines, and newspapers
- Looked at books and magazines with them, and who READ TO THEM
- Talked to them about what was happening around them
- Pointed out words in books and other media
- Took the time to teach them new words

Pre-reading Activities

One of the most important things you can do to help with reading is something that does not involve books. It is teaching new vocabulary words and language skills during everyday activities. Even a trip to the market can be important for teaching pre-reading skills. Take time to help your child name the different kinds of fruit and vegetables. Help your child "read" the words on the boxes and cans. (This word is "soup.") Thinking skills can be developed while sorting the laundry. (My shirt is bigger than your shirt.) All this new information will help your child improve language skills and help get ready for reading in school.

Why read together?

Reading books or magazines together can be an enjoyable experience for parents and children. Reading to children will encourage good language development. Listening to stories is the basis for good reading. Children learn how a book works, where the beginning is, and how the story goes from page to page until the end. They learn that the pictures can be clues about the story. When they hear new ideas and new words, children expand their world and develop their thinking skills.

Tips On Reading With Your Child

Reading to your baby

You can start reading to your child when the child is very young. Eight to ten months old is not too early. Babies can enjoy looking at pictures in cloth books, in magazines, and even in toy catalogs. It is not necessary to read a story to a baby who has not yet learned how to speak. Just looking at the pictures is fine.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair with the baby on your lap.
2. Hold the book so that the pictures can be seen. Point to the pictures on the page. Raise and lower your voice, with lots of OOOHs and AHHHHs.
3. If the baby points to something or imitates the sounds you are making, give hugs and praise.
4. Lift the page a little, and encourage your baby to help turn it.
5. As the child learns to speak, start reading the stories. Take time to look at the pictures together. Stop reading the story if your child wants to talk about a picture. You may be surprised at the creativity and intelligence of some of your child's ideas.
6. When your child is able to take care of a book, get some books the child will enjoy. Owning books is as important as owning toys. Some good books can be bought inexpensively at supermarkets, bookstores, or rummage sales.
7. Take your child to the library as soon as the child can sit still for the toddler story time.

Reading to the preschool child

1. Set aside some time each day to enjoy reading together. Choose a quiet, special time when the child is not doing something else.
2. Allow your child to choose a book for you to read.
3. Take time to look at the pictures. Help the child name things and tell what is happening. Use books with large and colorful pictures.
4. Raise and lower your voice as you are telling the story. If you are paying attention to what is happening, so will your child.

Reading with the school-age child

When your child starts school and starts learning how to read, it becomes a good opportunity for the child to read to you! Continue reading together daily.

1. You and your child can take turns reading to each other. Praise what your child does well. Avoid criticism.
2. Remember that reading together should be fun. Don't use story time to teach reading. Remember to stop before either one of you becomes restless, tired, or bored.
3. Take advantage of your child's interests. Choose dinosaur books for dinosaur fans, etc.
4. Don't make your child choose between reading and watching television or playing outside. Let these activities all have their own place in your child's daily life.
5. If your child misses or stumbles on a word while reading out loud, just say the word. Don't make your child feel like a serious error has been made.
6. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions for reading to your child. If your child is reading a book at the proper ability level, the child will have good feelings about reading.
7. Remember that children learn by imitation. The BEST way to encourage reading is by reading yourself.

For more information:

Beck, Joan. *How to raise a brighter child*. New York, NY: Pocket Books.

Cullinan, B.E., and C. Carmichael, eds. 1977. *Literature and young children*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Dodson, F. *Give your child a head start in reading*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Dodson, F., and A. Alexander. 1986. *Your child: Pregnancy through preschool*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Hendrick, J. 1980. *The whole child*. St. Louis, MO: C.V. Mosby Company.

Larrick, N. 1969. *A parent's guide to children's reading*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster (also Pocket Books, paperback).

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
(800) 424-2460

Send for their list of publications, including their guide for selecting, purchasing, and using children's books.

Refer to:

- 2.1 Language Development
- 3.1 Infant Stimulation
- 4.1 Learning New Words
- 5.0 Home Activities for Speech and Language Development
- 8.2 Suggested Reading for Children
- 8.3 Pre-Reading Skills



Suggested Reading for Children

by Linda M. Levine, M.Ed.

There are hundreds of excellent books for children. The following lists provide a good beginning. Ask your local librarian to help you with additional authors and titles.

For the Baby and Toddler

Author	Title
Richard Scarry	Early Words Little Word Book
Dorothy Kunhardt	Pat the Bunny
Stephen Lewis	Zoo City
Any toy catalog	

For the 2- to 3-year-old

Tana Hoban	Count and See
Leo Lionni	Swimmy
Anne Maley	Have You See My Mother?

For the 3- to 5-year-old

Mercer Mayer	Frog Goes to Dinner
Maurice Sendak	Where the Wild Things Are
Dr. Seuss	The Cat in the Hat
Paul Galdone	The Little Red Hen

For the 6- to 8-year-old

Dubose Heyward	The Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes
James Marshall	George and Martha
I CAN READ BOOKS, published by Harper and Row. Authors include Syd Hoff, Edith Hurd, Carla Greene, Nathaniel Benchley, Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban. They also publish I CAN READ sports books, EARLY I CAN READ BOOKS, I CAN READ science books, and I CAN READ mystery books.	

For the 8- to 10-year-old

Laura Ingalls Wilder	Little House on the Prairie
E.B. White	Charlotte's Web

For the 10- to 12-year-old

Author	Title
Roald Dahl	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Judy Blume	Are You There God, It's Me, Margaret

50 of the Best Authors for Young Children

Author	Title
Anno, Mitsumasa	Anno's Alphabet Anno's Counting Book Anno's Journey
Bemelmans, Ludwig	Madeline Madeline and the Bad Hat Madeline in London Madeline's Rescue
Brown, Marcia	The Three Billy Goats Gruff All Butterflies How, Hippo Once a Mouse Stone Soup
Brown, Margaret Wise	Four Fur Feet The Noisy Book Nibble, Nibble The Runaway Bunny 1,2,3 An Animal Counting Book Where Have You Been?
Buckley, Helen E.	Grandfather and I Grandmother and I Michael is Brave My Sister and I
Burningham, John	Mr. Gumpy's Outing Mr. Gumpy's Motorcar Seasons John Burningham's ABC
Burton, Virginia Lee	Mike Mulligan and His Steamshovel Katy and the Big Snow The Little House
Carle, Eric	The Very Hungry Caterpillar Do You Want to Be My Friend? 1,2,3 to the Zoo

Author	Title	Author	Title
dePaola, Tommie	Strega Nona Charlie Needs a Cloak The Cloud Book Watch Out for Chicken Feet in Your Soup Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs	Hoban, Russell	A Birthday for Frances A Bargain for Frances Bedtime for Frances Bread and Jam for Frances
de Regniers, Beatrice S.	May I Bring a Friend? A Little House of Your Own Poems Children will Sit Still For It Does Not Say Meow What Can You Do With a Shoe?	Hoban, Tana	Look Again Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue? Circles, Triangles and Squares Dig, Drill, Dump Over, Under, and Through Push Pull, Empty Full
Domanska, Janina	The Turnip Din, Dan, Doin, It's Christmas I Saw a Ship a-Sailing If All the Seas Were One Sea Spring Is What Do You See?	Hutchins, Pat	Rosies's Walk Changes, Changes Don't Forget the Bacon Goodnight, Owl The Surprise Party
Dr. Seuss	The Cat in the Hat Green Eggs and Ham Horton Hatches the Egg Horton Hears a Who The Sleep Book The ABC Book The Shape of Me and Other Stuff	Keats, Ezra Jack	The Snowy Day Goggles Hi, Cat Louie Peter's Chair Whistle for Willie
Duvoisin, Roger	Petunia Petunia, I Love You Petunia's Treasure Veronica See What I Am	Krauss, Ruth	The Carrot Seed The Backward Day A Hole is to Dig A Very Special House
Ets, Marie Hall	Play With Me Gilberto and the Wind In the Forest Talking Without Words	Langstaff, John	Over in the Meadow Frog Went a'Courtin Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go
Fisher, Aileen	Cricket in a Thicket Feathered Ones and Furry Going Barefoot In One Door and Out the Other Listen Rabbit The Ways of Animals Where Does Everyone Go?	Lionni, Leo	Swimmy Alexander and the Wind Up Mouse Fish is Fish Frederick Little Blue and Little Yellow On My Beach There are Many Pebbles Inch by Inch The Biggest House in the World
Flack, Majorie	Ask Mr. Bear The Story about Ping	McCloskey, Robert	Make Way for Ducklings One Morning in Maine Blueberries for Sal Lentil
Freeman, Don	Dandelion Corduroy Mop Top Quiet! There's a Canary in the Library	Milne, A.A.	When We Were Very Young Now We are Six
Gag, Wanda	Millions of Cats Nothing at All	Minarik, Else H.	Little Bear Father Bear Comes Home A Kiss for Little Bear Little Bear's Friend Little Bear's Visit

Author	Title
Munari, Bruno	Bruno Munari's ABC Animals for Sale The Birthday Present Bruno Manari's Zoo The Circus in the Mist The Elephant's Wish Who's There? Open the Door
Pienkowski, Jan	Shapes Numbers
Piper, Watty	The Little Engine That Could
Potter, Beatrix	The Tale of Peter Rabbit The Sly Old Cat The Tale of Benjamin Bunny The Tale of Jemima Puddleduck The Tale of Jeremy Fisher The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy Winkle The Tale of Tom Kitten
Reiss, John J.	Numbers Colors
Rey, H.A.	Curious George (and The Curious George Series) Anybody at Home?
Rockwell, Harlow	My Doctor My Dentist Machines I Did It
Scarry, Richard	Best Word Book Ever Cars and Trucks and Things That Go Best Counting Book Ever All Day Long Busy Busy World Find Your ABCs
Sendak, Maurice	Where the Wild Things Are Pierre Chicken Soup with Rice Alligators All Around In the Night Kitchen Really Rosie
Slobodkina, Esphyr	Caps for Sale
Spier, Peter	Fast-Slow, High-Low Crash, Bang, Boom The Erie Canal To Market, To Market
Steptoe, John	Stevie
Tresselt, Alvin	Hide and Seek Fog The Beaver Pond The Dead Tree The Mitten

Author	Title
Viorst, Judith	Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
Waber, Bernard	Ira Sleeps Over A Firefly Named Torch The House on East 88th Street Lyle, Lyle Crocodile
Wildsmith, Brian	Brian Wildsmith's Mother Goose Brian Wildsmith's ABCs Brian Wildsmith's 1,2,3s Brian Wildsmith's Wild Animals
Williams, Garth	The Rabbits' Wedding Baby's First Book
Yashima, Taro	Umbrella Crow Boy Momo's Kitten Plenty to Watch Seashore Story Youngest One
Zion, Eugene	Harry the Dirty Dog (and the Harry The Dog Series) Dear Garbage Man The Plant Sitter
Zolotow, Charlotte	William's Doll The Hating Book My Grandson Lew When I Have a Son Big Sister and Little Sister Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present

Recommended Magazines for Children

Highlights for Children, 2300 West Fifth Avenue,
Columbus, OH 43216
Ages 2-12

Humpty Dumpty's Magazine, Parents Magazine
Enterprises, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York,
NY 10017
Ages 3-7

Jack and Jill, 1100 Waterway Blvd, Box 5678,
Indianapolis, IN 46206
Ages 5-12

Sesame Street Magazine, Children's Television
Workshop, 1 Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023
Ages 3-5

Refer to:

8.1 Reading With Your Child
8.3 Pre-Reading Skills