

Other Activity Ideas

Birth to 2 Years

- Teach your baby to imitate your actions, like clapping your hands or blowing a kiss.
- Read to your child. Choose books that have large colourful pictures. Describe the pictures and ask questions like “What’s this?”. Encourage him/her to name and point to familiar objects.

2 to 4 Years

- Make a scrapbook of favourite things. Group them into simple categories (e.g. food, toys, people). Count items in the book and label them.
- Play the “Yes-No” game to help your child understand and ask questions. Ask questions like, “Are you a girl?” and “Do birds fly?”. Encourage him/her to make up questions of his/her own.
- Place familiar objects in a container. Have your child remove objects and tell you what they are and how they are used.
- Give your child photographs of familiar people and places. Have him/her make up a story using the pictures.

4 to 6 Years

- Give your child clues and have them guess what you are describing (e.g. “It’s red, yummy, and grows on a tree” – apple).
- Play games such as “house”. Exchange roles. Talk about different rooms in the house.
- Watch television with your child. Talk about what he/she is watching. Have him/her guess what might happen next. Talk about the characters and how they might be feeling.
- Go shopping for groceries together. Discuss what you will buy, how much you will need, and what you will make.

For more information:

The reference materials used in the production of this pamphlet include:

Pepper, J. & Weitzman, E. (2004) “It Takes Two to Talk: A Practical Guide for Parents of Children with Language Delays”. The Hanen Centre, Toronto. For more information, email info@hanen.org or visit www.hanen.org.

American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA). (2006). “Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Development”. www.asha.org.

Additional Resources of Interest

The Hanen Centre (www.hanen.org).

The Hanen Centre is a charitable organization committed to effecting change in the lives of children by creating programs to teach parents about language development and training speech-language pathologists to run Hanen programs in their work.

Beyond Baby Talk (Authors: Ken Apel & Julie Masterson, Published: 2001 - Prima Publishing).

Beyond Baby Talk is an excellent resource for parents that answers their questions about speech and language development. The authors discuss the first years of life, progressing from infancy into the preschool years.

Baby Signs (www.babysigns.com)

The Baby Signs Program teaches infants to use simple gestures to communicate with parents and caregivers before they begin to talk. Parents have reported that use of baby sign helps to ease communicative frustration when their children are not producing intelligible speech.

ACTIVITIES TO FOSTER LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Social Routines
- Adding Language to Interactions
- Activity Ideas

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Social Routines

What are social routines?

Social routines are an excellent way to introduce your child to conversation and the practice of taking turns. A routine has the following features:

- the same steps are used each time, always following the same order
- it begins and ends the same way each time
- it can be repeated several times each day
- different people in the routine have different roles

Examples of routines that you can use to interact with your child are:

- peek-a-boo
- pat-a-cake
- hide and seek
- horsie ride
- various songs and rhymes

How can you involve your child in social routines?

First, start the routine the same way each time. This will help your child to recognize it. It might also be useful to give the routine a simple name that he/she can use to request it.

Next, plan for when and how your child can take his/her turn. You can encourage them to take a turn at the start or end of the routine. You may need to adjust the routine so as to give your child a chance to take a turn. For example, you could pause in the middle of a song or rhyme and allow him/her to fill in the blank. The way in which the child participates will depend on

his/her current level of communication and familiarity with the routine.

Always repeat the same sounds, actions, and words. This will make it easier for your child to learn the routine and participate. Finally, end the routine the same way each time by saying "Finished!" or "All done!".

Adding Language to Interaction

Try to add language into all of your interactions with your child. Suggestions include:

- 1.) Use a variety of words. Try to avoid labeling only the objects in your child's environment. Be sure to also use words that express belonging (e.g. "my", "yours"), location words (e.g. "here", "up"), words for emotions (e.g. "sad", "happy"), action words (e.g. "walk", "sleep"), and words that describe (e.g. "hard", "blue").
- 2.) Expand what your child says. Imitate what he/she says, while adding in a few new words. This will help your child learn new ways of expressing himself/herself (e.g. if a child says "Mommy store", say "Yes. Mommy is going to the store.")
- 3.) Teach your child how to take conversational turns. Start by providing a cue such as a facial expression or a gesture, and then wait for him/her to talk. If your child does not take a turn, you take their turn for them. Do or say what they could have done or said.

- 4.) Highlight your language. Sometimes how you say something is just as important as what you say. The Hanen Program suggests using the 4 S's as a way to remember how you can highlight your language (see box).
- 5.) Ask questions to keep the conversation going. Asking a choice question encourages your child to take his/her turn. For example, ask your child "Would you like your doll or your teddy bear?". Yes/no questions can be a great way to communicate with younger children who may not be using words yet. Begin by introducing simple wh-questions that start with what, where and who, then move to when and how.

4 S'S TO HIGHLIGHT LANGUAGE

SAY LESS: use short simple sentences

STRESS: make important words stand out, helping your child to understand and learn them

SLOW DOWN: slow down your speech to give your child time to understand what you are saying and to try saying it themselves

SHOW: make sure your child can see what you are talking about by pointing to it, adding gestures or actions to your words, or showing him/her a picture