

# Communication Enhancement

*You are your child's best and most important teacher! Every day your child is learning through your words and actions. Below are some tips to help develop your child's speech, language and listening skills.*



**Follow your child's lead:** Talk about what your child is looking at or pointing to, from books, to toys, or cars moving outside of the house. Allow your child to drive the interactions. Repeat babbles, ask questions, and interact with your child.

**Read:** This is one of the best tools for developing language. Take a few minutes each day to sit down and read, allowing your child the opportunity to point to items on the page. You can label what your child is looking at or pointing to, and talk about the items that pique their interest.



**Enjoy music together:** Young children love music and movement. When they listen to lively songs, like "Old McDonald Had a Farm," they learn about the world around them and the rhythm of language.

**Alert to sound source or find the sound source:** Turn your baby towards the sound source. Your baby may demonstrate that they can locate sound by eye gazing, eye movement, pointing, turning their head etc. Be alert to these clues, and reinforce this skill by confirming the sound source and naming it. It is important to use every opportunity to make the association between a sound and what it represents. For example, "Look up in the sky. There's the airplane. The airplane says 'ahhhhhh'."



**Develop turn taking:** Vocal turn taking is necessary for conversation. To develop turn taking you should vocalize, then wait for your baby to vocalize. Repeat the baby's vocalization, then add a different vocalization or add a relevant word or sound. By waiting, you are signaling to your baby that it is their turn to "talk".



**Talk about daily routines:** Language is more meaningful when it centers on daily routines (i.e., changing diaper, feeding, bathing). It is important to use every opportunity throughout the day to talk about what is happening when involved in these routines. For example, when taking a bath you could say "Now we're going to take a bath. Can you feel the warm water on your belly? When we dry off, we'll get dressed and take a walk."



**Use a "singsong" voice:** Use words and phrases that have a variety of rhythms, intensity and pitches. This provides a variety of acoustic information. Highlighting these features will greatly assist in the development of auditory awareness as well as capture your child's attention.



**Create a listening environment:** Make sure there are not a lot of competing noises when you are interacting with your child. Talk face to face with your child providing visual support, and ensuring you are near the microphone of your child's listening device.

## Potential Areas of Focus for Speech, Language, & Listening Services

*For many children with hearing loss, a speech - language pathologist may work on different aspects to language, listening and speech skills. We've created a guide to help you understand the difference between each, and how you can help your child with the development of their communication skills.*

**Speech/Articulation:** Speech involves the coordination of articulators (i.e. jaw, lips, tongue, vocal folds, vocal tract and respiration), divided into three areas: articulation, voice, and fluency. This area focuses on the production of speech sounds. Such as, producing the sound "t" in the word "cat".

**Language:** Language therapy can concentrate on spoken, written or non-verbal communication. Therapy goals may focus on grammar, formulation of sentences, following directions, and reading comprehension. A child's ability to correctly understand and use language can affect their behavior, academic and social success. There are two parts to language development:

1. **Receptive Language:** focuses on the understanding of what one hears or reads.
2. **Expressive Language:** focuses on the form, content and use of language. This includes all forms of communication including gestures, words, and sentences.

**Listening:** developing your child's listening skills through a listening hierarchy when presented through auditory only modality: awareness, detection, identification and comprehension.

