

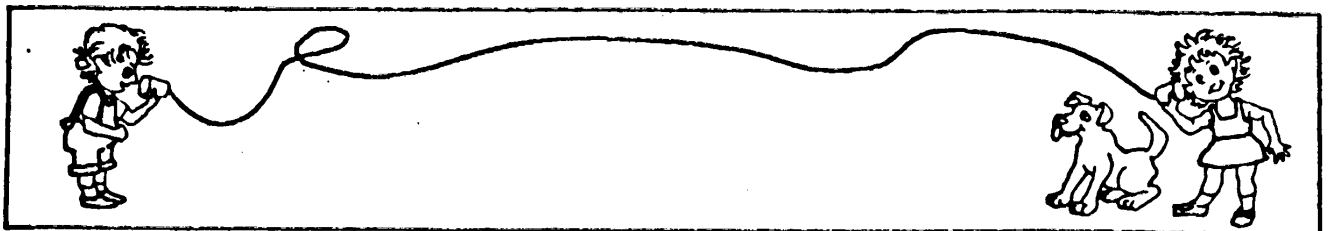
LANGUAGE STIMULATION

TECHNIQUES

All children have the innate desire to verbally communicate. As parents, it is our responsibility to provide our children with the right environment and stimulation to encourage and enhance good speech and language development. Language learning is a life long pursuit. However, the first five years of life are the most important ones in which to establish a strong linguistic base to build upon.

Language stimulation practices involve making a number of subtle changes in your interactions and behaviors with your child, which may serve to facilitate language development. For example:

- 1) **BE A GOOD SPEECH MODEL:** Our children learn through observation and imitation. Try “TO DEMONSTRATE” good speech and language patterns rather than “TO CORRECT” speech or language errors.
- 2) **MAKE LANGUAGE VISUAL:** Talk about what the child can see. It is important to label objects and actions that the child can readily see so that the child can pair language with a real experience. This practice can also be reinforcing as it allows the child to observe the consequence or result of language use.
- 3) **COMMUNICATE AT YOUR CHILDS LEVEL:** Be aware of your child’s language abilities. Then, talk with the child at, or just above that level. Keep comments simple and direct (avoid “Baby Talk”).



4) **FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S LEAD:** Observe what your child is doing. Provide comment or commentary about what your child is paying attention to or experiencing at that particular moment. This practice helps to make language more meaningful for your child.

5) **CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO USE LANGUAGE:** Does your child need to use words in order to communicate? Many of the questions we ask our children may require only a simple yes/no or pointing response. To increase the need to verbally communicate, try asking a question that requires a verbal response (i.e. "What would you like to drink?"). To increase the likelihood of a verbal answer, model a target response (i.e. "You're thirsty. Would you like a cup of Juice or water?"). Encourage, rather than demand imitation.

6) **EXPECT MORE FROM YOUR CHILD:** Using language expansion techniques, try to build upon your child's utterances. For example, if during mealtime your child hands you an empty cup and says "More," you might respond, "More? More milk. You want more milk."

7) **COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE FUN AND REWARDING:** Play games or plan activities that encourage verbal interaction. Play games in which your child needs to ask you for something (i.e. Go Fish). Another activity might be drawing a face with you asking your child for directions, "What do I draw next?" These activities foster turn taking and cooperation which are important for both language and social development.

