

9 Tips to Get Your Toddler Talking: It's All About Creating Opportunities

Do you have a child who has a few words mastered BUT he will only say them every once in a while? Do you hear a lot of whining? He might need more motivation along with extra opportunities throughout the day. Here are some tips and tricks to get your child talking:

1. The Expectant Pause:

This is great to practice when you are playing a repetitive game or song, but it can be used any time throughout the day when it's time to say a word that your child knows.

Example: After a few repetitions of saying, "Ready, Set, Go!" before putting your little one upside down or doing a pillow squish on her belly, you can say "Ready, Set . . ." Wait a few seconds with an excited, expectant look on your face to see if she will say "Go!" If she doesn't say anything, then you can say it right before you do the action. When she does start to say it, then she won't have to wait so long. So. . . talking = she gets the fun thing sooner!

2. Stopping Short During a Familiar Song:

This idea is just a different way of trying the Expectant Pause. Some songs that work well for this include:

"Ring Around the Rosies" – Stop before "down" to see if your little one will say it.

"Old McDonald" – Go ahead and sing the first couple of animal sounds and then see if your child will say that animal sound if you use the Expectant Pause.

3. Don't Anticipate His Every Need:

It feels good when you know exactly what your child wants, but think about it this way – Why would he need talk when you anticipate all his needs? Even if you know what he wants/needs, try to act confused to get him to communicate with you. If he continues to whine and point or lead you by the hand, you can say, "Oh, you want the _____, say _____"

4. Sabotage:

Okay, I know the word 'sabotage' sounds terrible (but that's what we call it in the 'biz'). It is really just setting up some opportunities around the house so you know your child will need to communicate to get your help.

Examples: Put a preferred toy within view but out of reach, so your child will have to ask you for help. OR put him in the bath but "forget" to put in the bath toys until he asks. Maybe start to eat one of his favorite snacks in front of him and don't share until he uses some form of communication.

5. Give Repeated Opportunities at Meals/Snacks:

Instead of just giving her a bowl full of her favorite snack, only give her a little bit of the snack. Tell her, "When you want more, say 'more.'" (Or any other word you think she'll say). Yes, she might get a little frustrated but if she has the ability to say the word, this is a time you can wait her out a little bit.

And if this is too hard, you can have her use sign language for "more."

6. Get Silly:

Sometimes reluctant talkers need practice making sounds with their mouth – fun sounds are a great place to start.

Example: If you have animal toys or books, see if your child will make animal sounds with you. OR try playing cars and making sounds like, "vrrrooom," "beep beep" and "crash."

7. Give Out Pieces of a Toy One-by-One:

When you and your child are playing with a toy that has multiple pieces to it (puzzles, stacking cups/blocks, Mr. Potato Head, car ramp), try being "in control" of the pieces. Instead of just putting them out on the floor, you'll want to have the pieces out of your child's reach so he has an opportunity to request the piece instead of just grabbing the next one.

8. Encourage Any Attempt to Vocalize:

It doesn't have to sound perfect or be the exact right word. If she says, "O" for "go" or says "car" instead of "truck." Congratulate her! That's a huge step in learning to talk. Sometimes I'll say, "Good try! It's like a car – it's called a truck!"

9. Turn off the T.V or Tablet (or at least limit it):

Sure, there are educational programs out there and those are better than non-educational programs, BUT *no program on television* is going to increase language development the way that *interacting with a parent/caregiver will*. That's because educational programs and apps teach *concepts, but they don't actually teach how to talk* or give practice.

Research is now showing that over-use of devices can lead to delays in communication development, attention span, and school performance.

Looking for more tips, activities, and free printables to help your child learn to talk? Visit SpeakPlayLove.com

Thank You for Downloading!

This product is for single family, school, or caseload use. It is not permitted for commercial use or to be posted online without permission.

Please feel free to copy and distribute to caregivers in your school or who are a part of your caseload!

If you enjoyed this product, please follow Speak Play Love on Facebook or check out my store at TeachersPayTeachers.com/Store/Speak-Play-Love (You don't have to be a teacher to get a free account!)

Thanks!

Margaret

margaret@speakplaylove.com