



Handy Handouts®

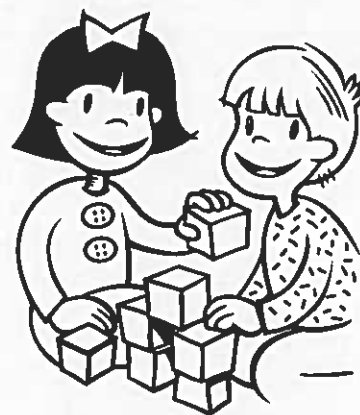
Free, educational handouts for teachers and parents*
Number 446



What's in Your Bag?

by Lindsey Wegner, M.A., CCC-SLP

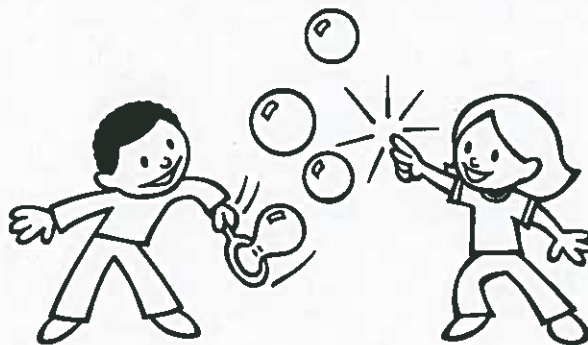
Every speech-language pathologist (SLP) can relate to the struggle of finding the right materials to use during therapy sessions, especially when working with preschool-aged children who require many different activities. Choosing just the right items to engage children as they improve their language and articulation skills can be a difficult task. It's important to include toys that encourage and increase social engagement and cognitive skills, as well as receptive and expressive language skills. Here are a few essentials to fill your speech and language bag.



1. **No Spill Bubbles** - Use bubbles in a variety of ways to increase vocabulary, articulation, oral motor skills, and joint attention skills (when one individual alerts another to an object by means of eye-gazing, pointing, or other verbal or non-verbal indications). Most children love bubbles, so the SLP can also use them as a great reinforcement tool.
2. **Search Bag** - Place different items inside a pillowcase, canvas bag, or another bag made with material that is difficult to see through. Have the child reach inside the bag to find the item you describe. This creates a sense of excitement, and it's great for language development.
3. **Ball** - Increase joint attention, turn taking, fine motor skills, and vocabulary skills using a small ball.
4. **Blocks or Building Materials** - Simple blocks can assist in targeting basic concepts vocabulary such as: more, up, down, on top, under, tall, short, colors, etc. When you finish building with the blocks, it is fun to knock them down and start over again.
5. **Toy Animals** - Animals often play a part in learning early vocabulary. The child can imitate animal sounds in learning how to articulate early speech sounds.

6. **Doll** - Dolls provide numerous activities and opportunities to learn and practice language and vocabulary. Activities such as naming body parts and participating in joint play lead to understanding verbs, sentence building, answering questions, and more.
7. **Picture Books** - Books with simple repetition and early vocabulary words are useful during therapy. The therapist can make it entertaining by emulating sounds and using different intonations while reading. Interactive books with sections to open and close, touch, or move are also engaging.
8. **Graduated Stacking Rings** - These simple motivational toys for children help develop reasoning and fine motor skills.
9. **Wind-Up Toys** - Target joint attention, asking for help, understanding simple commands, and work on fine motor skills using these small toys.
10. **Puzzles** - Target receptive and expressive skills using puzzles with different scenes, numbers, letters, animals, etc. For preschool-aged children, puzzles with wooden pegs or tiny knobs are best for little hands.

A well-packed speech and language bag can help an SLP keep children engaged with numerous activities, making every therapy session more productive and fun for everyone!



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Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit www.superduperinc.com and type in the item name or number in our search engine. If you're viewing this Handy Handout on a computer, click the links below to see the product descriptions.

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Big Vocabulary Nouns Photo Cards
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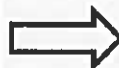
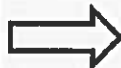
Webber Photo Cards Function Pair-Ups
[Item #WFC-62](#)

Rainy Day Communication Carryover Ideas

Sequencing

Explain to your child how you will complete the activity using words such as 'first, next, + last.' Show your child these pictures and say:

'First, we'll put on our boots.
Next, we'll put on our raincoat.
Last, we'll grab our umbrella.'



After completing the activity, have your child repeat all of the steps back to you. Ask, "How did we get dressed for the rain?" It is okay to provide your child with sentence starters, such as, "First, we put on our..." Allow your child to point to the pictures above as he/she retells the steps.

Following Directions

Ask your child to listen closely and follow each instruction. Repeat each direction, and break it down into smaller steps if your child needs assistance.

First, point to the boots. Next, point to the raincoat.

After you put your boots on, put your raincoat on.

Before you open your umbrella, step outside.

Basic Concepts

Ask your child questions about location concepts. For example:

'Are your feet inside or outside of the boots?'

'Are you standing under or above your umbrella?'

Wh Questions

Ask your child questions such as, 'Where are we? What are we doing? Who is with us? Why are we dressing for the rain?'

Describing

Point to your eye, nose, tongue, hand, and ear while describing any item. Have your child do this too.



Ask: What category is rain in? Weather. What does rain do? It falls from the sky. Tell me how rain looks, smells, tastes, and feels. What are sounds you hear outside when it's raining?

If it is too difficult for your child to answer these questions, that's okay- simply describe the item aloud to your child while he/she listens.

Grammar

Model future, present, and past tense verbs to your child. 'I will wear my raincoat. I'm wearing my raincoat. I wore my raincoat.' If your child is able to, encourage him/her to finish your sentence next. 'I will open my umbrella. I am.' If your child cannot finish your sentence, remember that he/she is learning by listening!

Discuss plurals with your child. 'I see one boot. Now I see two boots!'

Dear Parent/ Guardian of _____:

This handout is intended to assist you in helping to encourage growth in your child's communication skills outside of therapy. If you should find yourself completing this fun activity with your child, please use this page as a reference to provide you with suggestions for practicing a variety of receptive and expressive language skills. Please do not hesitate to provide your child with extra help if needed. Repeat your questions, model the correct answer, and offer two answer choices. Please note: all activities in this worksheet should be completed under the supervision of a responsible adult.

Speech-Language Pathologist

Different Ways of Following Directions

By Kevin Stuckey, M.Ed., CCC-SLP and Susie S. Loraine, M.A., CCC-SLP

Verbal (spoken) directions are a part of everyday life for adults and children. Appropriate behavior, social interaction, and academic success are all dependent on the ability to understand and follow verbal directions. Following verbal directions requires strong knowledge of basic concepts and the ability to process and retain auditory information.

Basic concepts are words that individuals need to comprehend to perform everyday tasks such as following directions, participating in classroom routines, and engaging in conversation. In fact, basic concepts are typically the foundation of verbal directions. Basic concepts may include, but are not limited to:

- **Basic colors** - red, blue, green, etc.
- **Directions** - through, around, etc.
- **Quantities** - few, many, etc.
- **Sequences** - first, next, last, etc.
- **Shapes** - round, square, etc.
- **Size** - big, little, etc.
- **Social/emotional states** - happy, sad, etc.
- **Characteristics** - old, new, etc.
- **Textures** - rough, smooth, etc.
- **Time** - late, early, etc.
- **Spatial relationships and positions** - front, behind, top, bottom, etc.



Whether in the classroom with teachers, at home with parents, or in the community with friends, children are asked to follow directions. They actively engage their brains when listening and following verbal directions. There are five different types of following directions. These include basic directions, sequential directions, quantitative and spatial directions, temporal directions, and conditional directions.

Basic Directions

Following basic directions starts with a simple, one-step direction using one element, such as "Point to the ball." The difficulty increases as more elements are added to the verbal directions, such as color (*Point to the red ball.*), size (*Point to the large ball.*), action (*Point to the ball that is spinning.*), or location (*Point to the ball that is below the car.*). Then, the higher levels combine these elements (*Point to the small red ball that is spinning below the car.*).

Sequential Directions

This skill targets the child's ability to follow multi-step and sequential directions. Multi-step directions require following two or more directions at a time (*Put the red block in the basket and close the door.*). Sequential direction tasks involve following directions in a specific order (*Put the glue in the box, push your chair under the table, and get in line.*).

Quantitative and Spatial Directions

Some verbal directions involve the use of quantitative concepts and spatial relations. Terms to denote quantity include *one, two, all, both, either, or, and, not, except, and don't*. Terms indicating spatial location include *first, second, third, last, and between*. Higher levels of this activity combine quantitative and spatial relations with descriptive elements such as size and color. For example, a higher-level direction may be: "Choose the toy that is between the small green rocket and the big yellow train."



Temporal Directions

Temporal directions target a student's ability to follow directions containing the words "before" or "after" in a variety of positions within the utterance. For example, in some instances, the term "before" is located in the middle of the direction: "Put the truck in the box before you put the robot in the box." Another trial may position the term "before" at the beginning of the utterance: "Before you put the doll in the box, put the rocket in the box." Higher levels of this activity increase auditory memory and processing demands by adding color attributes. For example: "After you put the green doll in the box, put the red plane in the box."

Conditional Directions

This task provides directions with certain conditions. Students decide what actions to do based on the given condition(s). For example: "If a doll is in the box, put the box on the truck." Some directions also involve negation: "If a rocket is not in the box, put the box on the truck." Higher levels add elements such as color, quantity, and size to increase the auditory memory and processing demands: "If a green doll and a blue train are in the box, put the box on the large truck. If not, put the box on the small truck."

Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit www.superduperinc.com and type in the item name or number in our search engine. Click the links below to see the product description.

Webber® HearBuilder™ Following Directions—Professional Edition
Item #HBPE-133

Webber® HearBuilder™ Following Directions—Home Edition
Item #HBHE-122

Click on the following link for more information: <http://www.hearbuilder.com/>

Using an AAC Device at Home

Parents have a unique opportunity to teach language in natural situations. As a parent, you are the constant in your child's life. Schools, therapists, and teachers may change, but you are always there. If you understand your child's device and effective implementation strategies, you can help train new members of the team. You can't teach your child a skill you don't have. Learn your child's device. Know how to communicate with it and know how to program it. Practice, practice, practice!

Kids with language delays have difficulty learning concepts by being told what they mean. They need to see it and experience it! To develop expressive language, you'll want your child to pair a consistent motor movement with hearing the word and seeing something happen.

Initially, give them an opportunity to use words and see a response without a right or wrong answer. Provide opportunities for errorless learning. Ask open ended questions. Don't focus on labeling items or testing their knowledge.

- "Which color do you want to wear?" or "What color should I wear?"
- "What do you want to drink?"
- "What do you think?"
- "What animal am I?" Then act like that animal and make animal noises
- Have several verbs accessible and whatever they say, their sibling has to do

Teach core words in a variety of activities throughout the day.

- "Go" - To go in the wagon, to go in the car, to make someone go away, to make a toy operate
- "Turn" - To spin in a swing, to spin a top, to open a jar, to request a turn
- "On" - to turn the light on, to turn the TV on, to ride piggyback
- "More" - to request more food/drink, to blow up a balloon more, to dance more

If a child "says" a word you don't think he meant to say, respond to it anyway. This provides an opportunity to teach a new word.

Encourage them to communicate for a variety of reasons, not just to request an item or activity. Allow them to practice their language with greetings, rejection, commenting, directing, describing, etc.







Briefly encourage device use during activities while they are meaningful and enjoyable but quit while it's going well. There is a danger in pushing too hard and too fast in that the child will see the device as something that makes his life harder.

Follow your child's passions or interests, you can expand your child's vocabulary around them.































Accept all forms of communication: gestures, facial expressions, intelligible verbalizations. If you understand what the child is saying, don't make him "say it on your device." If you don't understand, "Can you tell me this way?"

Model the language at your child's level of communicating. If he uses one or two word combinations, don't model complete sentences. Allow siblings to use the device.




















Core Words

 Back	 I	 is	 want	 not	 All Word Lists
 Core Words	 you	 can	 like	 more	 Personal
 QuickFires	 it	 do	 go	 a	 Little Words
 Topics	 he	 have	 stop	 and	 Description
 Keyboard	 People	 help	 Actions	 the	 Word Forms






QuickFires

 Back	 Greeting & Social	 Personal Needs	 Feelings	 Questions	 My Phrases
 Core Words	 Dad	 Mom	 Yes	 No	 Ok
 QuickFires	 Don't	 No way	 Good	 Bad	 Really
 Topics	 Wait	 I don't know	 Hey	 Look	 Come here
 Keyboard	 Please	 Thank you	 Sorry	 You're welcome	 Excuse me

QuickFires - Personal Needs

 Back	 Bathroom	 Thirsty	 Hungry	 Hurt	 Uncomfortable
 Core Words	 I need help.	 Don't feel well	 Take a break	 Lie down	 Reposition
 QuickFires	 Help me?	 Pick it up?	 Hold this?	 One minute	 Privacy
 Topics	 Done	 Not done yet	 Turn it on	 Turn it off	 Put it on
 Keyboard					

QuickFires - Feelings

 Back	 Like that	 I am happy	 Love you	 Excited	 How great!
 Core Words	 Don't like	 I'm sad	 I'm mad	 I'm scared	 Embarrassed
 QuickFires	 What's wrong?	 Are you ok?	 How you feel?	 You think?	 How I feel?
 Topics	 Want to talk?	 Tell you later.	 Don't want to talk	 Don't tell	 Nobody cares
 Keyboard	 Family member []	 My friend	 At school []	 My assistant []	 At home []

Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Getting Started with AAC

1. Model Using the AAC Around the Child

How Typically-Developing Children Learn to Talk: Typically-developing children hear their native language being spoken around them constantly. They hear language being used for an entire year before they start to speak their own words. They hear adults use their language to communicate with them and with each other.

How Children with AAC Learn to "Talk": Children need to see their AAC device being used around them. If they never see anyone communicating with the AAC device, why would they be motivated to use it themselves? If your child is using sign language, sign along when you speak to your child or to other adults when your child is around. You don't have to sign every word (especially at first when you don't know all of the signs), just sign the ones you know.

If your child is using pictures, show him the pictures as you say those words. For example, if you're asking your child if he wants a cracker, show him the picture for cracker as you say it. If your child has a speech output device that talks when you push a button, push the buttons along with whatever you're saying. Again, you don't have to push a button for every word you say, just hit the important ones.

Just as children with typical speech need to hear their language A LOT before they are able to begin using it, the child you're working with needs to see his AAC device being used a lot as well. Use the system when you are talking to the child, talking to other adults, talking to other children, etc. Just make sure that you are leaving the AAC device or system near the child (not taking it away) so that he or she can use it as well.

2) Encourage The Child's Attempts to Use the AAC Device

How Typically-Developing Children Learn to Talk: As a parent of a baby, I can tell you that I am constantly praising my child when he does anything that could possibly be seen as intentional communication. If I'm walking out of the room and my baby says "ba", I immediately smile at him and say "bye! Yes, I'm going bye bye!". Now, as a SLP, I know my 7-month-old isn't really saying "bye" and that was probably just a coincidence, but that's what we do as parents. And it works! When we reinforce our children's accidental speech acts, the child learns that communicating is powerful and will create meaningful interactions with the adults around him.

How Children with AAC Learn to "Talk": At first, the child you're working with will probably not be using his AAC device meaningfully. He may just push buttons randomly to hear what they sound like. But whatever you do, don't say "he's just playing with it" and take it away. You wouldn't take away a baby's voice box because he's babbling instead of saying real words. This is all a part of the learning process.

If the child pushes a button, even if it's accidental, you can still respond as though it was meaningful. If he pushes "potato" when you're playing in the bedroom, you can say "Potato? We don't have any potatoes in here. There may be some in the kitchen though." This may seem silly, but it helps the child understand that the words he is creating using his AAC device have real meaning.

This phase of exploration won't last forever. The child will eventually become more meaningful with his use of it. But for a while, you're going to have to be ok with the child "playing" with it to see what it does, just like a baby playing with his voice.

3) Have the AAC Device Present at All Times

How Typically-Developing Children Learn to Talk: This one's pretty straight-forward. A child always has his voice with him. He doesn't turn his voice off or leave it at home on accident. It doesn't run out of battery and need to be charged. The teacher doesn't take it away when he's talking over her. She just teaches him not to talk when she's talking.

How Children with AAC Learn to "Talk": Just like you shouldn't (and can't) take away a child's voice, you shouldn't take away a child's AAC device. If the child is using sign language, you don't need to worry about it because his hands are always there. However, if the child is using pictures or a device of some kind, you will want to make sure the device is with him and functioning at all times.

If the AAC device needs to be charged, charge it during times when he won't need it, like while he's sleeping. Or, get an extra battery and switch it out.

Even if you're annoyed that the child is pushing buttons on the device instead of listening or paying attention, you still can't take it away. Instead, do what you would do with any child and teach him that he has to have a quiet voice or quiet talker during ____

situation.

4) Set Up Opportunities for the Child to Use the AAC Device

How Typically-Developing Children Learn to Talk: As parents and educators, we tend to set up situations for our children to be successful at communicating. For example, we may sit our child down in his high chair and hold up some grapes and say "do you want *grapes*?" Then, we pause to see if he will say it on his own. We give him a situation to say what he wants. We are even more likely to provide these opportunities

when we know it's a word that our child is able to say. For example, we probably wouldn't say "what's that" when pointing to an animal that our child has never seen before, but we would probably ask him the same question when he sees a dog (or whatever his favorite animal is). We do that because we know he can say "dog" so we know he'll be successful.

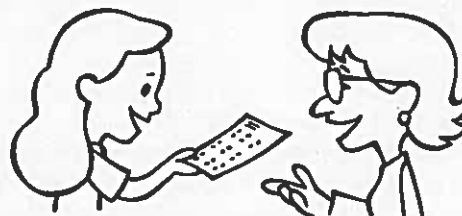
How Children with AAC Learn to "Talk": Set up situations during the day that will allow the child to use his AAC device to communicate. In the classroom, this may be during a structured repetitive task like snack time. Present items that you know the child will be motivated to communicate for and that the child knows how to find or use with his AAC device. For example, have some snacks that the child knows the signs to or can find the buttons for on his device.

Show the child the item and then model the word using the child's AAC device. Then, pause to see if he will use the AAC to communicate. If he's having trouble, you can always take his hands and help him. Just make sure that the child is receptive to being touched and doesn't seem upset by your help. Some children will be just fine with this and others will become very upset. You don't want this to become a negative experience and you don't want the child to feel like he has no control over what happens to his body. Be respectful of the child's wishes if you decide to try helping him use the device and never force it.

Speech Practice at Home

by Kevin Stuckey, M.Ed., CCC-SLP and Julie A. Daymut, M.A., CCC-SLP

Good communication depends on good articulation skills. Articulation refers to the production of speech sounds. When a child has difficulty producing specific sounds, speech intelligibility decreases, and the listener may not understand the child's intended message. A speech-language pathologist (SLP) works with a child to help him/her produce sounds correctly. They may work on individual sounds in isolation or sounds in syllables, words, phrases, or sentences. The ultimate goal is to help a child correctly produce speech sounds spontaneously at the conversational level. The SLP may send practice work home for the parents to complete with their child. Homework activities provide opportunities for a child to practice speech in a more natural environment with the encouragement and support of family.



Practicing Speech with Your Child

Following is a list of homework suggestions so that a child may practice speech in everyday situations and environments. Incorporate these simple suggestions at home to help your child practice speech sounds in a functional way. ***Be sure to follow the guidance of the SLP that is working with your child when implementing these—and any other—practice exercises.***

Homework Suggestions – Word/Phrase/Sentence Level Activities (adapted from ARTIC LAB®):

1. Practice your // words 25 times while getting dressed for school.
2. Practice your /r/ phrases 25 times on your way to school or on your way home.
3. Practice your /s/ sentences while shopping at the grocery store with your parent(s).
4. Practice your for five minutes before or after dinner.
5. Practice your 25 times before turning off the light to go to bed.
6. Practice your with a brother/sister for five minutes.
7. Practice your words while taking a bath.
8. Practice your during commercials of one TV show.
9. Practice your 25 times before or after playing video games.
10. Practice your 25 times before brushing your teeth.
11. Practice your while riding your bike.
12. Practice your while cleaning your room/picking up toys.
13. Practice your while your family cooks dinner.
14. Practice your as you walk to the corner and back.
15. Practice your for five minutes while riding in the car.

Helpful Products

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Webber's® Jumbo Artic Drill Book
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Word FLIPS®
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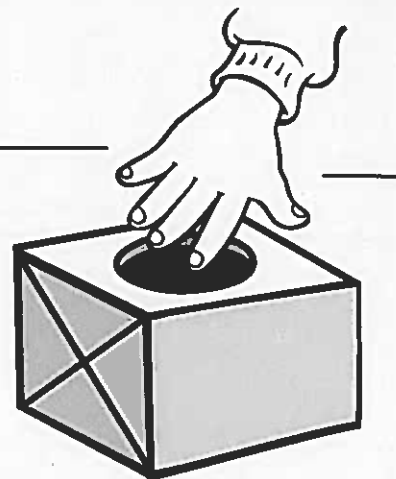
Interactive Sing-Along Big Books Set 3
[Item #TPX-18421](#)

Turn & Talk® Early Sounds
[Item #BK-350](#)

Creative Articulation Practice at Home: Fun for the Whole Family!

by Keri Spielvogel, MCD, CCC-SLP

Looking for a new way to work on articulation skills at home? Or a new and different way to get your students interested in articulation therapy? Make it fun and exciting for your children by trying the following suggestion. It's an activity for all the children to enjoy!



Fun Articulation Practice... "in a box!"

- 1) Make a "mystery box" using common household objects and your child's toys. Cut a slot in the top of a good-sized box. Make sure that your child's hands plus an object fit through the slot.
- 2) Help your child decorate the box the way he/she wants it to look. This makes the child feel like he/she is participating and provides a great language-building activity.
- 3) Talk to your child's SLP about what he/she is working on in therapy.

Some specific questions to ask are:

- What sound/sounds is he/she working on in speech class?
 - What position/positions is he/she working on with each sound? (Basically, **initial** means a sound at the beginning; **medial** means a sound in the middle; and **final** means a sound at the end. For example, for the /k/ sound, "cup" is initial; "bacon" is medial; and "book" is final.)
 - What level is he/she working on? (There are different levels a child works on, each getting more difficult. The "easiest" level is **isolation**, or the "k" sound alone. Next, the "k" sound is in some position within a **syllable** (i.e., "ka," "aka," or "ak.") Next, the **word** level (i.e., cup, bacon, book), then, a phrase (i.e., "in the cup;" "in the book"), then, a sentence (i.e., "I read a book," or "The juice is in the cup"). Finally, the sound is monitored in conversation for consistent production.)
- 4) Pick 10-15 objects, letter cards, or syllable cards with your child's target sound in them and, without your child seeing, "hide" them in the Mystery Box.
 - 5) Let your child choose an object/card and say/name it, use it in a phrase, sentence, or ask questions to elicit conversation.

- 6) Continue until your child sees all objects and completes each task.
- 7) For a special treat, put a "surprise" in the box your child can keep or eat!

Some ideas for five commonly misarticulated sounds are:

S

Initial

cereal
celery
cent
seed
seashell
salt
soap
soup
softball
sock



Medial

bicycle (toy)
dinosaur (toy)
motorcycle (toy)
pencil
receipt
baseball
glasses
icing
bracelet
whistle

Final

bus (toy)
dress
(shoe) lace
box (smaller)
horse (toy)
(dental) floss
lace
purse
ice (in a baggie)
necklace

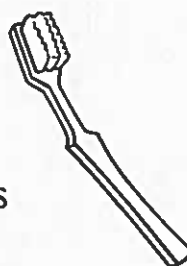
SH

Initial

shoe
shapes (toy)
ship (toy)
shirt
shells
shampoo
shoelace
sugar
shovel (toy)
shark (toy)

Medial

horseshoe
toothbrushes
tissue
marshmallows
nutshells
washcloth
dishes (toy)
invitation
lotion
flashlight



Final

hairbrush
toothbrush
fish (toy/picture)
mouthwash
nail polish
dish
leash
paintbrush
starfish
licorice

R

Initial

rope
rose
ring
rabbit (toy)
robe
rattle
ribbon
radio
rocket (toy)
raisins



Medial

airplane (toy)
carrots
earrings
horse (toy)
purse
fork
marbles
markers
shirt
fire engine (toy)

Final

(teddy) bear
car (toy)
pear
jar
flower
feather
dollar
dinosaur (toy)
paper
letter



K**Initial**

can
key
car (toy)
comb
candy
kite
carrots
cow (toy)
cat (toy)
corn

**Medial**

chicken (toy)
bacon (toy)
pumpkin (toy)
rocket (toy)
helicopter (toy)
bicycle (toy)
sneaker
napkin
chocolate
monkey (toy)

Final

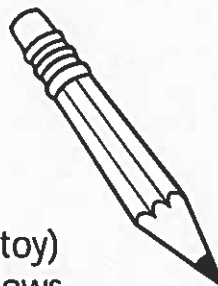
sock
stick
truck (toy)
block
snake (toy)
book
cake
rake (toy)
milk
black (crayon)

**L****Initial**

lamp (toy)
leaf
lamb (toy)
lime
ladder (toy)
lemon
letter
lipstick
lotion
lizard (toy)

**Medial**

balloon
collar
dollar
jelly
necklace
pillow
ruler
elephant (toy)
marshmallows
helicopter (toy)

**Final**

bell
doll
ball
bowl
nail
football
pencil
towel
seashell
mail

Use this activity with all your children and with every sound. With a little creativity, you can make articulation practice FUN!

 Name

 Date

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Online!
www.superduperinc.com

Parents Help to Encourage Social Success at Home, Too!

By Audrey Prince, M.Ed.

Parents are fundamental contributors to their child's success. As many educators acknowledge, parents are a child's first teachers. A home environment that promotes academic and social success should not be undervalued. Many parents work to improve a child's academic success by making sure the child completes all homework, studies for tests, and develops creative projects. But parents also have opportunities to help improve a child's social success. Below are suggestions for teaching social skills that parents can practice with their children at home.



Steps for Teaching Social Skills at Home

1. Discuss the Need for Social Skills- Children need to understand that social skills are important. Share with your child that adults use social skills in their workplaces and community. Talk about/point out experiences that you or your child may have had or observed when social skills were necessary. Brainstorm and come up with a list of social skills that you and your child can work on throughout the year. Below is a list of suggested social skills to work on at home with your child.

List of Suggested Social Skills

- taking turns
- helping others
- praising
- sharing materials
- asking for help
- using quiet voices
- participating
- staying on task
- saying kind things
- using people's names
- celebrating success
- sharing ideas
- organizing materials
- paraphrasing
- following directions
- resolving conflicts
- active listening
- accepting differences
- communicating clearly
- waiting patiently



2. Work on One Social Skill at a Time- When working with your child on social skills, focus on just one skill at a time. You may want to select one skill to focus on each week. Create a chart to list the skill for that week and record how the child is doing. Use a simple system such as happy face, neutral face, and sad face to show progress.

3. Talk About the Social Skill- Help your child identify what appropriate behavior looks and sounds like. For example, praising looks like a thumbs up, clapping, or smiling. Praising sounds like, "Terrific!" "I knew you could do it!" "You're so smart!" or "Way to go!" Make a list with your child of "looks like" and "sounds like" behaviors and post it next to your chart for recording the target behavior and the progress your child makes in demonstrating appropriate behavior.

4. Practice the Social Skill- After discussing what a particular social skill looks and sounds like, provide an immediate opportunity for your child to practice the appropriate social skill behavior (looks like and sounds like). Act out a scenario with your child in which he/she must use appropriate behaviors to respond in a social situation.

5. Pause, Reflect, and Review- At the end of each day, take the time to pause, reflect, and review your child's use of social skills that day. You may want to encourage your child to keep a journal to write down thoughts about the day. If your child is not yet writing, you can keep a journal together, in which you write the entries. Help your child celebrate his/her social skills successes—if you make it a big deal, your child will, too.

Parents can engage their children in these types of activities anytime during the day. Think about using time in the car or at the dinner table to discuss social skills. As parents, emphasizing the necessity of social skills is one of the most important things you can do to help your child succeed in school—but more importantly, in life.

Teaching the Fundamentals of Grammar and Syntax at Home

by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed.

The formation of language begins at birth. A baby's cries communicate the need for help and attention. The baby responds to a parent's touch by calming down. Later, the baby begins to produce sounds that name or request familiar objects or family members; ba ba (bottle), ma ma (mother), da da (father), pop pop (pacifier). We don't think of this immersion of language as the beginning of developing grammar and syntax, but it is. Children are "speaking" and someone is responding appropriately! As a child's language develops, parents can help children understand how to use their language more effectively through their own use of appropriate **grammar** (classes of words, their forms, and functions) and **syntax** (the arrangement of words and how we put them together for a specific meaning). Some children with speech and language difficulties have problems understanding, pronouncing, and using even the simplest and smallest units of a word (-ed, -ing, -s). Therefore, their sentences may present as immature and sometimes illogical.



Children begin to realize that the more words they hear and repeat, the more their world is expanding. As early as two years of age, children are attempting to use prepositions, nouns, pronouns, and verbs together; "Me up mama," "want my ba," "you go dada." The more words children use, the more they experience. Even though children put together crazy sentences (that may make sense to a parent) or questions that are cute and comical, parents should always respond to their child's communication attempts with correct grammar and syntax. Responding to your children with baby talk when they are trying to communicate with you teaches them that this type of talk is correct and appropriate.

Syntax is how we order the words in a sentence to produce a certain meaning. Grammar refers to using the correct word forms in sentences.

Children with speech and language difficulties often:

- Use words in the wrong order (their sentences don't make sense or are misleading).
- Struggle to use pronouns correctly (identifies self as 'she,' 'her,' or 'me' when 'I' is correct).
- Cannot grasp how to use word endings (-ed, -ing, -s) correctly.
- Do not understand how to connect sentences or thoughts using conjunctions (and, but, or, yet).
- Do not understand verb tenses (past, present, future).
- Need practical experiences to understand some concepts.
- Need to use concrete material to understand plurals (one doll, two dolls).

Here are some strategies to use with children at home to help improve their use of grammar and syntax.

- Use correct grammar and syntax when speaking or responding to your child. Don't focus on correcting your child. For example, if your child says, "Her hitted me!" you should respond, "Did she hit you?" Always respond as an adult. Don't use baby talk.

- Play sentence games. Cut pictures of everyday items from magazines, paste them on cards, and have the child give a sentence verbally describing the object to the other players for them to guess the item. ("It has icing you can eat and candles that tell how old you are.")
- Cut simple scenes from magazines and glue them on cards. Give the child open-ended prompts, and have the child complete your prompts verbally or write sentences. (*Picture of dog playing catch with his owner* – "What is/was the dog/owner doing?" "The dog is/was/will..., His owner is/was..., The ball is/was..."-this gives the child opportunities to use the correct form/forms of the verbs.)
- Cut out cartoon frames from newspaper comics and glue them to cards. Add a cartoon speech bubble to the cards and have the child write what the character(s) is saying, or have him/her tell you verbally. Ask questions about the cartoon that prompt the child to use different forms of the verb. "What do you think he is saying? What was he saying? What do you think he will say? Where are they going? Where have they been? Where are they?"
- Write words on note cards – Sentence Scramble. Pick words that make a complete sentence/question and scramble them (include the punctuation mark). Have your child organize the words into a sentence/question that makes sense.
- Use cloze sentences like "Mad Libs®" for practice using correct word forms. These kinds of activities are great for practice with verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
- Use everyday objects around the house to teach plurals. "I have a spoon. You have two spoons."



Even before children learn to read and write, they can learn to use correct grammar and syntax. Having a grasp of grammar and syntax will help your child with reading comprehension and writing competence.

Helpful Products

The list of Super Duper® products below may be helpful when working with children who have special needs. Visit www.superduperinc.com and type in the item name or number in our search engine. Click the links below to see the product description.

Plurals Fun Deck®

Item #FDU-08

What's Being Said? Fun Deck®

Item #FD-39

What Are They Asking? Fun Deck®

Item #FD-93

Granny's Candies® Add-On Set 3

Item #GB-156

Vocabulary & Syntax Roundup

Item #BK-243

Webber® Photo Cards Describing Fun with Dogs and Cats

Item #WFC-52

Say and Do® Rebus for Articulation

Item #BK-262

216 Artic Tickle Stories®

Item #BK-294

First 100 Sight Words

Item #FD-74

200 More Sight Words

Item #FD-86