

Early Language Development

Handouts and Activities with Bonus CD-ROM



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Introduction

For several decades, parents and professionals have seen the benefits of early intervention for speech and language development. Doctors and teachers no longer say, “Don’t worry if your child is not talking yet; he’ll catch up by kindergarten.” Pediatricians carefully screen early language milestones at twelve, eighteen, and twenty-four month check-ups. Speech-Language Pathologists, special educators and other learning specialists are seeing significant increases in the number of infants and toddlers on their caseloads. Traditional therapy in the clinical setting alone usually does not meet all the needs of toddlers and their families. Parents at times can find it difficult to provide an environment that will stimulate language. Therapy services for children have been brought to homes and daycare settings to provide strategies for learning language during play and daily routines.

Early Language Development is a collection of reproducible handouts (book and CD-ROM) designed to provide parents and caregivers with simple, practical suggestions to stimulate the development of language comprehension, verbal expression, and intelligible speech.

The following are several suggestions in which the handouts can be used.

- **Home Activities** - Providing families with practical strategies to facilitate language growth at home is a major goal, especially in the context of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). These handouts can be left with parents, grandparents, and daycare providers to integrate specific activities into their daily routines.
- **Lesson Planning** - Each handout provides a theme for planning activities. The handouts can be particularly helpful to student interns and therapists completing clinical fellowship requirements.
- **Parent Workshops** - In many instances, training parents of “at risk” children can accelerate language growth, eliminating the need for direct intervention. Use these handouts as reinforcements of your training sessions.
- **Consultation with Professional Colleagues** - Many times, special educators, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and other personnel are working with families of young children. When infants reach the early language stages, these professionals frequently collaborate with Speech-Language Pathologists to provide families with information and strategies to aid in language development.

We sincerely believe that you will find these handouts and activities valuable for early language development.

Linda Mawhinney
Mary Scott McTeague



About the Authors

Linda Mawhinney, M.S., CCC-SLP, is a Speech-Language Pathologist specializing in early intervention. She received her Master's degree from Loyola College of Baltimore. She has worked exclusively with the birth to five-year-old population for the past eighteen of her thirty-two years of service. She provides diagnostic and therapeutic services in the Harford County Infants and Toddlers Program in the state of Maryland and maintains a private practice.

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Linda Mawhinney and Mary Scott McTeague have worked together in the Harford County Infants and Toddlers Program for ten years. They helped to plan and implement the county's first program of speech and language intervention in the natural environment. They have provided language-training workshops for parents, daycare providers, and preschool teachers. Linda and Mary Scott have been guest speakers at various conferences for professional groups, including the Speech Pathologists of Harford County and the Maryland Speech and Hearing Association.



Dear _____,

I will be sending home information and activity pages to help your child improve his/her communication skills. The ideas in these pages can be used in many of your daily routines like going shopping, bath time, and meal time.

Practice and play at home will help your child's language skills grow and improve more quickly than with therapy alone. Please take time each day to work with your child's language. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding your child's progress.

Sincerely,

Name

Date



**Recommended Book List
for Young Children**

Bill Martin, Jr. books:

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You See?

Eric Carle books:

The Very Busy Spider Board Book
From Head to Toe Board Book
The Very Quiet Cricket

Eric Hill books:

Spot Goes to the Beach
Where's Spot?

Alexandra Day books:

Good Dog, Carl
Carl Goes Shopping
Carl Goes to Daycare

Sandra Boynton books:

But Not the Hippopotamus
Moo Bah La La La

Ten Little Ladybugs by Melanie Gerth

Where Is Baby's Belly Button? by Karen Katz

Peek-A-Who by Nina Laden

Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney

I Love You Forever by Robert Munsch

Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown

Pat the Bunny by Dorothy Kunhardt

Eye Contact

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Eye contact is one of the earliest means of communication. It begins when parent and baby look at each other. Eye contact is used to request, greet, or direct attention. Often children with language difficulties do not look at the speaker. One of our first goals is to help your child develop eye contact.

- To establish eye contact, sit face to face with your child. Attempt to place your child higher than you. Examples of possible positions are:
 - sit your child on your lap,
 - sit in a chair and place your child in a high chair or booster seat,
 - place your child on the couch or chair and sit on the floor in front of him/her. If your child has physical limitations, a Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, or Speech-Language Pathologist can give you more ideas.
- To draw your child's attention, hold objects near your face to help guide your child without verbalizing. Often words do not have meaning and for other children, a verbal cue could cause him/her to tune you out.
- Tap your child's nose and then your own nose. After the child looks, even for a brief second, reward him/her and say "Good looking!"
- Put your child's hand on your face to gain attention before giving him/her a direction to follow or a choice.
- Eliminate or reduce auditory and visual distractions, like the television, radio, etc. This helps your child focus on you.
- As your child increases eye contact with you, give him/her the verbal cue, "Look." When your child looks at you, respond.
- Play "funny face" games in the mirror. Your child can establish eye contact with you in the mirror.

Joint Attention

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



What is joint attention? Joint attention is the sharing of an experience between a child and a partner. During the infant stage, this partner is the parent/caregiver. A shared experience is looking at or directing attention to an object or event. Joint attention is an essential skill needed for language, speech, and social skills.

The beginning of joint attention in an infant can often be noted during nursing or feeding, when there is face to face contact. Many times children with significant communication and social impairments have not developed joint attention.

Here are activities to help develop this skill.

- Tell your child *"Look at me,"* then tap his/her face and then your face. After you have given this verbal cue, give your child time to respond.
- Point to a toy that your child likes and say, *"look."* Gently turn his/her head toward the toy. When he/she looks at it, play with the toy or give it to him/her.
- Hold up a toy or favorite item and say, *"look."* Your child should look at you and then the object. Reward by giving the toy to your child.
- Blow bubbles and say, *"look."* Point as your child tracks the bubbles. Blow more bubbles when he/she looks at you, repeat the word *"look,"* and point.
- Blow up a balloon, but don't tie it or let it go. Say, *"look"* and release it when your child looks.
- When your child becomes interested in books, point to a picture and say, *"look."* Help your child point to pictures. The goal is for your child to look at you and then the picture. By sharing awareness and interest in the same picture or book you are achieving joint attention.
- When another family member comes into the room, point and say, *"look."* Reward your child for looking with a physical activity, such as tickling or patting.

Your child may need more time to understand what turning his/her head means, so don't be discouraged if this skill is slow for him/her to learn.

Turn Taking

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Turn-taking is essential in conversation as speech and language develops. In infants and toddlers, this skill begins in play and during joint attention and interaction. Taking turns is one of the early goals that your child will need to practice to become an effective communicator. Below are play activities to encourage and develop this skill.

- Use a toy car and a slide. Make a slide by propping a piece of cardboard against a chair or use your child's slide. Cue your child by saying, "*Ready, set, go,*" then drop the car down the slide. Get the car when it reaches the bottom. Tell your child, "*Your turn.*" Give him/her the car to let it go. Catch it as it reaches the bottom and say, "*My turn.*" Continue taking turns until your child begins to lose interest.
- Take turns with a pop-up toy. Hold the toy near you. Say, "*My turn*" and push a button. Push the toy to your child and tell him/her, "*Your turn.*" Reinforce your child by clapping.
- Use building blocks for this activity. Hold the blocks in your lap. Stack two blocks. Give your child one block and say, "*Your turn.*" Help him/her stack a block if needed. Continue in this fashion for a set of 10 turns. Let your child knock the tower down.
- Use a shape sorter toy, three-shape cans, or boxes. Hold the shapes in your lap. Say, "*My turn*" and put a shape in. Give one to your child and say, "*Your turn.*" Continue until all the shapes are put in the container. Dump the shapes out and continue for as long as your child maintains interest.
- Taking turns can be emphasized with any tickle or play game. Just use the cues "*My turn,*" "*Your turn.*"

Helpful Hints

- Keep the objects for the activity out of your child's reach. This allows you to control turn-taking and develop the skill.
- Provide your child tactile, visual, and verbal cues. Pat your chest when it is your turn. Take your child's hand and use it to pat his/her chest for his/her turn.

Motor Imitation

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Speech is a complex motor and verbal task. One of the most important early steps in speech development is to copy or imitate movements.

Helping your child learn to imitate movements will improve eye contact and interaction. Set aside one or two periods a day to focus on movement imitation. Establish a time and place that eliminates distracting noises and reduces visual distractions. No specific time period is recommended. You know your child best. Remember these sessions should be enjoyable for you and your child.

To begin, sit at your child's eye level in a face to face position. This will assist eye contact and help direct attention. Children may be in a high chair during these play sessions to focus attention and reduce the tendency to roam the house. The following activities are perfect for beginning to learn to imitate:

Motor Imitation

Clap	Wave	Scribble	Brush hair
Blow a kiss	Throw a ball	Push buttons	Stir with a spoon
Push the car	Pat the puppy	Knock blocks down	Hammer a peg
Open things	Pull off socks	Fly a plane	Put hats on
Blow bubbles	Brush teeth	Bang blocks	Tickle feet

Make a box of functional objects that can be used for imitation. Your box may include: **cups, blocks, cars, spoons, balls, hats, small boxes to open and close, toy hammer, toy vehicles, etc.**

There is no specific number of skills that your child must learn. The above activities are suggestions. Use your imagination!

Sound Imitation

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Toddlers will imitate sounds more easily than words. Verbal sounds should be made simultaneously with movement. Don't just push the car – push the car and say, “vroom.” Don't just tap the drum – tap the drum and say, “boom-boom.” Many times parents will report that their toddler does not say words. However, during play the toddler makes the cow say “moo,” the truck say “rrrr,” the bubbles go “pop,” and the blocks go “uh-oh.” All of these sounds use the same vowel and consonant sounds that will be used for syllables and words. If parents make lots of verbal sounds during play, toddlers will begin to imitate these sounds as an important first step to imitating words and phrases.

Here are sound imitation activities.

Transportation

Train	“choo-choo”	Push train down track.
Car	“beep-beep”	Drive car.
Fire Truck	“whoo-woo”	Drive the truck.
Boat	“puh-puh-puh”	Sail the boat in wave motion.
Truck	“honk-honk”	Honk a horn on the semi, pulling down.

Food and Kitchen Play Set

Popcorn	“pop-pop-pop”	Pop fingers up.
Hot Chocolate	“hot”	Blow on the cup.
Happy Face	“mmm-mmm”	Lick lips.
Yucky Face	“yuck or blah”	Stick tongue out and wrinkle nose.

Household Objects/Toys

Clock	“tick-tock”	Rock head back and forth
Phone	“ring-ring”	Hold phone up to ear
Vacuum	“brrrrmmmm”	Pretend to push vacuum/toy vacuum

Dolls/Action Figures/Animals

Sneezing	“achoo”	Place hand over nose and mouth.
Hiding	“peekaboo”	Cover face.
Baby	“waaah”	Tap baby.
Cow	“moo”	
Dog	“ruff, ruff”	
Duck	“quack, quack”	

Early Speech Sounds

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



"There is a one-year-old in my neighborhood who is talking in complete sentences, and I can understand every word she is saying!" "My Billie is two-years-old and no one knows what he is saying!" Speech Pathologists and educators frequently hear statements like these from parents. The question many parents are asking is, *"Why does it take so long for some children to learn to pronounce words, so that they can be understood?"*

Articulation, or the pronunciation of speech sounds in words, is a complicated motor skill. A great analogy is to think about articulation like riding a two-wheeled bicycle. Some children will get on a bicycle, wobble a little, and then take off with hardly any spills. They have learned to peddle, steer, brake, and balance all at the same time. Other children will take months to coordinate it all and have Band-Aids all over to prove it! The mouth is like that bicycle, and your teeth, lips, and tongue are the pedals, handlebars, and brakes that must all work together to achieve speech sounds. On a bike, you can look down at your hands and feet, but you can't see your mouth (unless you are looking in a mirror). The child must rely on listening and feeling the speech sounds. Children cannot learn to say sounds until they are old enough for muscle growth and fine motor ability to support this motor skill.

Between one and three years of age, children should use a wide variety of consonant sounds in babbling, vocal play, and first words. First words may not sound perfect, but using them to communicate is wonderful, no matter what they sound like. If a child pronounces juice as "doo" but uses that word to label his/her juice and to request more juice, he/she is using a word functionally to communicate. Try to avoid saying things like, "No, not doo, say juice." Instead, try "You said juice. Let's go get some juice!" The child then has a model for pronouncing "juice" accurately, and eventually the speech will improve.

The first sounds that toddlers begin to master are usually lip sounds "p, b, m, w." Words like "mom, pup, mine, ball, what" may start sounding perfect. Also "h" and "n" are early sounds. Remember that sounds in the middle of words or at the end may be more difficult than beginning sounds. Below is a chart detailing sound development.

Age of child	90% of children master these sounds
2 years old	p, d, m, w, h, n
3 years old	t, b, k, g
4 to 5 years old	f, v, y
5 to 7 years old	s, z, j, l, r, sh, ch, th, blends

First Words

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



During the first year of life, a baby reaches out for an object and can't quite get it. The baby cries, an adult turns to him/her, and says, "*Here sweetie, let me get that for you.*" Ahhh communication!

Children learn early that their voice makes all the big people accommodate their needs. Speech, however, is a difficult skill, requiring sharp thinking skills as well as motor coordination. We have to make our lips, tongue, and jaw move in the correct ways in order to make words.

The key to verbal communication is to make a word that will get others to meet our needs. First words usually identify the people and objects in our immediate environment. Later, words are used for functions like, to call attention, to label, to request, or to protest. "*Da*" may mean "*There's my Daddy*"; "*Where is my Daddy?*"; "*I want that, Daddy*"; or "*I don't want that, Daddy!*"

How can we help a child learn words that will help him/her to function in a verbal world?

- Model simple short words and phrases (verbalizations). Toddlers will have a tough time isolating a word from a lengthy paragraph of words. Repetition of single words and short phrases is best. Example: "*Ball. My ball. Where's ball? Ball. Get that ball. Ball. Go ball!*"
- Hold a toy or object next to your face when you say a word. This action gives the child a view of your mouth, which helps develop oral motor skills needed to produce words. Get on the same eye level as your child to develop face-to-face communication.
- Respond to gestures. If your child reaches for an object, you know that he/she wants it. Pick it up and hand it to him/her while saying the word. Gradually, delay your response to gestures, allowing time for your child to try and say the sound or word.
- Praise all early verbalizations as words, even if the intelligibility is poor.
- Try not to anticipate your child's every need. A delay of a few seconds before picking your child up or handing him/her the desired object will give the child a chance to attempt verbalization.

Microphones work well. Look for the inexpensive microphones that echo, or try using the paper tube from an empty roll of paper towels.

What If Those First Words Don't Come?

Simple Signs May Help

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



The key to verbal communication is to make sounds or words in order to satisfy our needs. First words function to call the people we need, or get the comforts and objects that we want in our environment. Parents should not be concerned with the pronunciation of early words. Reward children for any attempt at a word by giving them the thing they were seeking. Use lots of praise such as, “*good talking, you said, ‘bottle’*” even if the attempt may not sound like the actual word.

Two commonly used first words are “more” and “mine” because toddlers want everything they see, and usually when they get something, they always want more. Play lots of sharing games where the parent gets one and baby gets one, whether it’s a block, a cracker, or a turn under the blanket for peek-a-boo. Keep saying the word “*mine*” or “*my turn*.” Try to get your toddler to repeat “*mine*” or “*mmm*.” Ask them, “*Do you want more?*” Help them to say, “*More*” or “*Mmm*.” If the verbal communication is just not happening, sign language can be a wonderful tool.

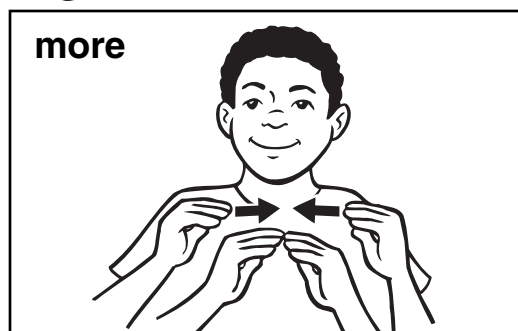
A conversation may go something like this: “*Was that cracker good?*” “*Do you want more?*” “*Tell me.*” “*Tell me more.*” (Point to your own lips.) “*Look at my mouth – mmmm.*” “*Say, ‘mmmm.’*” “*Can you say it?*” “*Here, let’s make your fingers say it.*” (Hold your child’s hands and bring her fingertips together - see next page) “*Good job! You said more. Here’s more crackers.*”

Remember! **Sign language is a temporary tool.** The goal is to teach your child that communication works. That magic word got him/her the cracker, even if his/her fingers were doing the talking. As children get comfortable with using a sign, they eventually add a sound to the sign, add a word to the sign, and then stop using the sign when it is no longer needed.

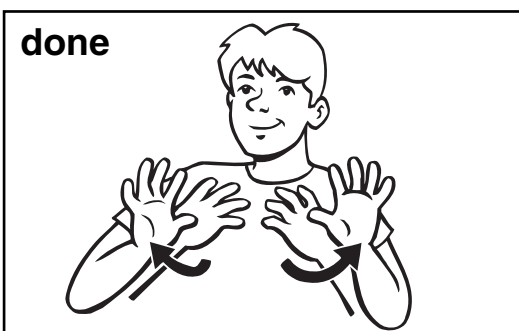
Early Hand Signs



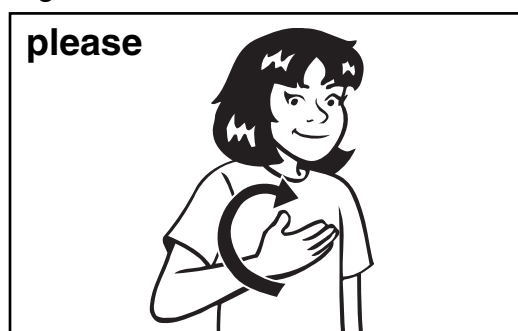
Pat chest with open hand.



Tap the fingertips of both hands together several times.



Flip hands to palms out.



Place palm on chest & move it around in a circular motion.



Place fingertips against lips, like putting food in your mouth.



Make a "cup" with your hand. Bring "cup" to mouth in a drinking motion.



Touch lips with fingers, move hand away from mouth with palm up.



Make a fist with both hands extending thumb and pinkie. Then, rotate hands up and down.

Expanding Sentences

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



When should you expect a child to converse in sentences?

Children slowly start to string words together when they have developed a collection of single words. Many times it is difficult for a toddler to increase his/her verbalizations from single syllables to two syllables. Syllable repetitions such as *bye-bye*, *pop-pop*, *mom-mom*, *beep-beep* are helpful. When syllables are mastered, two syllable words like *baby*, *bubble*, and *puppy* are attempted. This is why most children say, "Mama" and "Dada" before they say "Mommy" and "Daddy."

There are several functional phrases that frequently occur in a child's daily life. Examples of these are "uh-oh, all gone, all done, my turn, did it." These can be practiced throughout the day. There are also some very useful pivot words, which can be combined with the nouns in a child's vocabulary to make two word sentences. Some great examples of pivot words are *hi*, *bye*, *my*, *in*, *more*, and *want*. These are practical because children are always greeting, leaving, claiming property, and putting things into containers. Examples of phrases using pivot words are:

Hi baby	Bye-bye bear	Want cookie	My cookie
Ball in	In box	More milk	Bye bubbles

Children combine lots of function words and pivot words before they start putting nouns and verbs together. It is easier to say, "My cookie" than it is to say, "Eat cookie." When children are ready to combine nouns and verbs, you can model simple noun-verb or verb-noun phrases for them. Don't worry about *-ing* endings on the verbs. That will come in time. Examples:

Puppy eat	Eat cookie	Bunny hop	Go car	Car go
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When noun-verb and verb-noun phrases are combined, then "puppy eat" and "eat bone" will soon become "Puppy eat bone!" You may start hearing long strings of words and functional phrases which are the beginning of conversation in sentences. ("Uh-oh!, Cookie, All gone, More cookie, Mine")

The best thing that you can do for your child is to string words together in short word combinations in your own speech. Remember, this is not baby talk. Model the important words in the sentence and leave out some of the connectors like *a*, *the*, *with*, *to*, and *for*. Connector words have no meaning to a toddler, but "Daddy read book" says it all!

Asking & Answering Questions

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Auditory processing is the way our brain receives information from our ears, figures out the meaning of the signal, and determines the appropriate way to respond. One processing skill is the ability to respond accurately to questions. Some question types are more difficult to process than others. Many times a child will echo a question instead of answering it. For example, if you ask, *“What are you doing?”* your toddler might answer, *“Doing.”* The easiest question types to answer are as follows:

- **Yes/No** – ask an EASY yes/no question, such as *“Do you want a cookie?”* versus a more difficult yes/no question, such as *“Did you take that toy away from your brother?”* You can help a toddler learn to answer by exaggerating your head nodding *“yes”* or shaking *“no.”* A good way to practice this is by hiding a toy in one of several containers and playing a search game. *“Is it in here?” “No!” “Is it in here?” “Yes!”*
- **What’s this?** – Naming familiar objects is an early verbal expression skill. You may find some inconsistency with responses to a *“What’s this?”* question. Try multiple choice – *“What’s this?” “Is it a ball or a truck?”*
- **Where?** – Toddlers should respond to *“where”* questions by searching and pointing. When you ask, *“Where’s your shoe?”* you will know that the information is processed if the child looks at the shoe, shows the shoe, or points to the shoe. Eventually, he/she will answer with a word like *“Here”* or *“There.”* You should not expect him/her to express a location (*“in the bedroom”*) until he/she is much older.
- **What doing?** – Toddlers learn the names of people and objects (nouns) before they learn action words (verbs). When your toddler begins to use early action words, such as eat, drink, sleep, run, and clap, you can begin to ask, *“What’s he (she, it) doing?”* Remember that the *-ing* ending on a verb is difficult and may not initially be expressed.
- **Whose?** – Toddlers learn early that certain things are theirs. Try asking this question – *“This shirt is mine.” “Whose shirt is this?”* Practice turn taking. *“Whose turn is it?”*
- **Who?** – Practice this with your family photo album. *“Who is this?”*

Question types that are too difficult for most two-year-olds include:

When?

Why?

How Many?

What color?

What if?

Terrific Two's!

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Independence is a crucial stage in toddler development. Toddlers want to control the situation and make choices for themselves. Unfortunately, this often leads to a power struggle between parents and their toddlers. Try these tricks to maintain peace in the toddler world.

The Two Choice Game

Toddlers want to make their own choices; however, parents need to make decisions that keep them safe and healthy. Therefore, as often as possible, give the toddler two choices and let him/her control the situation by making their own choice. This works best if the choices are visual as well as auditory. Therefore, don't just ask, "*Do you want raisins or cheese crackers for snack?*" Hold the raisins and the cheese crackers out and ask the toddler to make a choice. "*Which one do you want?*" Toddlers, who are not yet able to verbally express their requests, can touch or point to their choice. If they have some functional words, such as "*please*" or "*mine*," you can encourage a verbalization, even if the "*cheese cracker*" was too difficult to say. Think of all the situations during the day that you can give your toddler power over his/her environment:

- Do you want to wear this green shirt or this red one?*
- Do you want to listen to your music or watch your movie?*
- Should we take teddy or dino to bed?*
- Do you want milk or juice?*

Beware of the Option Pitfall

We frequently make the mistake of asking a toddler a question when we do not intend to give them an option of "*yes*" or "*no*." For example, when it's bedtime and we intend to put our toddler to bed now but we ask, "*Are you ready to go to bed now?*" If your toddler answers, "*No*," you are stuck – after all, you did give the option. Give your toddler many opportunities to make decisions throughout the day. However, in the everyday life of a toddler, parents have to make some of the decisions. Giving a statement instead of a question may make a big difference.

Instead of:

- Are you ready for bed?
- Will you put these toys back in the bin?
- Don't you want to sit in your chair for dinner?

Try this:

- Five more minutes, and we go to bed.
- Time to pick up toys. Help me.
- You need to be in your chair. Can you climb up by yourself or should I help you?

Daily Routines

Bath Time

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



The best opportunities for learning language are through daily routines. Review the word lists below to target language skills, during your bath time routine. Some of the words may be difficult for younger children to pronounce. You will know that they comprehend the words if they identify objects by finding or pointing, and if they follow directions with the action words or the concept words.

Object Words

Tub
Water
Bubbles
Soap
Towel
Shampoo
Toothbrush, toothpaste
Various body parts
Various toys

Action Words

Wash
Scrub
Dry
Pour
Pop
Blow
Brush

Concept Words

In
Out
Wet
Dirty
Clean
All gone
All done
Empty

Sounds and Phrases

Time for a bath.
Fill it up.
Wash my face.
Bubbles go up.
In the cup.
Water goes out.

Water on. Pshhh.
In the tub. Splash!
Wash my hair.
Blow bubbles.
All done. Get out.
Bye-bye water. All gone.

Water in the tub.
Toys in. More toys in.
Bubbles. Pop-pop-pop.
Pour water in.
Dry my belly. Dry my back.
Brush my teeth.

Daily Routines

Time To Get Dressed

by Linda Mawhinney & Mary Scott McTeague



The best opportunities for learning language are through daily routines. Review the word lists below to target language skill during your child's morning routine. Some of the words may be difficult for younger children to pronounce. You will know that they comprehend the words if they identify objects by finding or pointing, and if they follow directions with the action words or the concept words.

Object Words

Shirt
Pants
Shoes
Socks
Diaper
Coat
Pajamas
Hat
Arm, leg, hand, foot, head

Action Words

Stand up
Sit down
Give me
Button
Zip
Brush
Put on
Take off
Tie

Concept Words

On
Off
Up
Down
In
Mine
Yours
Clean
Dirty

Sounds and Phrases

Let's get dressed.
Pajamas come off.
Put your head in.
Pants on.
Clean socks – Mmmm.

My shirt; your shirt.
In the hamper.
Arms in – one, two
Zip up – ZZZZZZZ.
You look great! Ahhh.

Arms up – Up-Up-Up.
Shirt on.
Button your shirt.
Dirty socks – Yuck!
All done!

Daily Routines

Time To Eat

by Linda Mawhinney & Mary Scott McTeague



The best opportunities for learning language are through daily routines. Review the word lists below to target language skill during your child's morning routine. Remember, some words are difficult for children to pronounce. You will know that they comprehend the words if they identify objects by finding or pointing, and if they follow directions with the action words or the concept words.

<u>Object Words</u>	<u>Action Words</u>	<u>Concept Words</u>
Spoon	Sit down	Mine
Fork	Pour	Yours
Cup	Stir	In
Plate, dish	Clean up	More
Bowl	Eat	Hot
Fridge	Drink	Cold
Bottle	Bite	Big
Juice, milk, water	Cut	All gone
Various food names	Wash	All done
Towel	Blow	

<u>Sounds and Phrases For Toddler Talk</u>		
Time to eat. Wash hands.	Sit down. My chair.	My spoon. My cup.
Juice please.	Pour it. Pshhhhh	Juice in.
Cold juice – Brrr.	Uh-oh – A mess.	Wipe it up.
Hot. Blow on it.	Stir it up.	Want more?
More please.	Want more milk?	Put away.
In the sink.	All done.	Wipe my hands.

Daily Routines

Going Out

by Linda Mawhinney & Mary Scott McTeague



The best opportunities for learning language are through daily routines. Review the word lists below to target language skill during outings. Some of the words may be difficult for younger children to pronounce. You will know that they comprehend the words if they identify objects by finding or pointing, and if they follow directions with the action words or the concept words.

<u>Object Words</u>	<u>Action Words</u>	<u>Concept Words</u>
Door	Knock	Inside
Car	Open	Outside
Coat, hat, mittens	Close	Cold
Store	Walk	On
Cart	Run	Off
Tree, flower, grass	Ride	Open
Dog, cat, cow	Drive	Closed
Truck, bus, train	Hold	Go
Rain, snow	Carry	Stop

Sounds and Phrases

Time to go out.

Put hat on.

In the car.

Ready, set, go.

Hold my hand.

All done. In the bag.

Get my coat.

Knock-knock. Open the door.

Go-go-go. Brrrm.

Hi cows. Moo.

In the cart. Mommy push.

Where's Daddy?

Brr. Cold out.

Close the door. Boom.

Red light. Stop.

Park the car. Get out.

Buy apple juice.

Let's go home.

Imagination

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Pretend play is an important part of a child's development. Collect household objects that can be used with dolls, stuffed animals, action figures, etc. Fill a box or bag with items and keep it handy with other toys.

Basic Household Objects

Cup	Spoon	Bowl	Comb
Pitcher	Baby bottle	Dull plastic knife	Plastic fork
Pretend food	Vehicles for doll	Washcloth	Toothbrush
Hairbrush	Doll clothes	Blanket	
Doll furniture	Bubbles for pretend bubble bath		

Imaginative Play Activities

- Pretend to pour juice, give the doll a drink, feed the doll, wipe its mouth.
- Pretend to spill juice, wipe it up, wash the dishes, put dishes away.
- Pretend to give the baby a bath, brush baby's teeth and hair, put baby to bed, cover baby up, rock baby to sleep. Give baby a ride in a car or stroller.

We recommend that actions be done with corresponding sounds or words! Make up sounds to go with actions. Model single words and very short phrases to go with the action. Many children will imitate sounds before they start imitating words. Here are some sounds and words to use during pretend play:

Action

Pour juice
Drink juice
Pretend to spill
Feed doll
Pretend to cut
Stir food
Wash baby
Blow bubbles
Brush hair
Brush teeth
Cover baby
Rock baby
Push car
Push stroller

Sound

Pssshhh
Slurp
Splash
Num-num-num
Kih-kih-kih
Tih-tih-tih
Wshhh
Blow
Sh-sh-sh
Ch-ch-ch
Shhh
La-la
Brrrrm
Rrrrr

Words

Pour, More
Drink, Yum
Uh-oh, Oh no
Eat, All done
Cut
Stir it up
Wash
Pop, Bubbles, Up
Pretty
Say ahh, Say eee
Night night
Rock rock
Go-go, Stop, Out
In, Bye-bye

Puzzle Play

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague

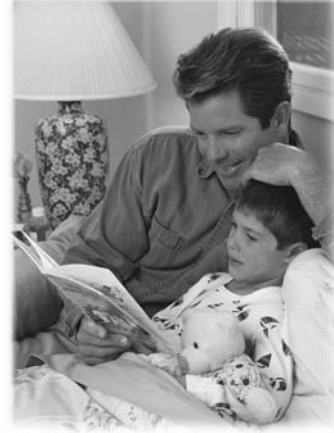


Puzzles are excellent toys for learning vocabulary, developing fine motor skills, turn-taking, joint attention, task completion, and interacting with others. The best puzzles for toddlers are sturdy, simple wooden or plastic puzzles with knobs on the pieces and five to ten pieces. Practice lots of fun language activities with puzzles. Try these:

- Empty the puzzle pieces, and keep the pieces away from the child.
- Hold one piece at a time by your face and name it. Then give it to your child. Point to where it goes. You may need to use hand-over-hand to help. Words to use: *“Turn, turn, turn,” “No, no fit,” “Yes, in,” “Where go?”*
- Hold up two pieces and ask your child to make a choice. *“Do you want the horse or the cat?”* Your child may reach for one, just look at one, or try to say one. Whatever the response, reinforce by handing him/her the piece and say the word.
- Use puzzle pieces to practice turn-taking. Empty the pieces into a bag. Take turns picking one and labeling the turns *“My turn”* and *“Your turn.”* Use the sign for *“mine”* (pat your chest) every time you say, *“My turn.”* Occasionally ask, *“Whose turn is it?”* If your child even attempts a verbalization, say *“Good job! You said ‘Mine.’”* If your child remains silent, help him/her pat his/her chest while you say *“My turn”* and then hand over the puzzle piece.
- Use puzzles to practice yes/no questions. *“Does the piece go here?” “No!” “Does it go here?” “Yes!” “Do you want another piece?” “May I have one?”*
- If the puzzle pieces are people or animals, use the piece to practice naming and action words. As you give each piece to your child, make the piece *“walk-walk-walk”* to the puzzle. Try *run, hop, jump, ride*, etc., or ask your child what animal it is.

Book Time

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Children can learn new words and concepts from pictures in books. To promote vocabulary comprehension, remember that photos are the best representation of an object; life-like pictures are second. Cartoon pictures do not give the most accurate description of an object, but will hold your child's interest. Look for books with colorful, clear pictures that are not busy. Young toddlers need to see pictures with only a few objects on a page. Don't worry about the words and sentences written in the book. You can ignore the printed material while looking at pictures and naming them. Ask your child to find an object on the page and help him/her to develop pointing skills. Here are helpful hints for book time.

Helpful Hints For Toddler Book Time.

- Let your toddler choose a book from a group of two to four.
- Board books with thick pages do not tear easily.
- Let your toddler help turn pages.
- Toddlers love books with flaps inside that can be opened to reveal a hidden picture. It is best to read these books together to avoid tearing the flaps.
- Practice finding pictures on the page. *"Where's the puppy?"* Help your child learn to point with one finger.
- As your child begins to use words, ask, *"What's this?" "What is he doing?" "Is that a duck?"*
- Children love to cuddle when reading a book. Occasionally, sit across from your child to allow face-to-face contact, while looking at the pictures. Watching a person's mouth form a word helps a toddler say the word accurately. Try sitting on the floor in front of a chair or sofa where your child is sitting to look at a book. This will put your face at the level of the book.
- Point to your mouth when you say a word in the book.
- Put together some props that go along with a storybook. If your book is about a teddy bear that eats his dinner and goes to bed, find a bear, spoon, cup, and blanket. Reenact the story with your props.

Songs & Finger Plays

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Songs, rhymes, and finger plays are valuable tools for developing language. Children learn through repetition. Singing favorite songs and retelling favorite rhymes help children anticipate and predict. The actions and finger movements that accompany many rhymes and finger plays are often fun adult-child interactions. Tips:

- Sit at your child's eye level or place him/her in your lap for face-to-face contact.
- Help your child's fingers make the movements and actions of a finger play or song.
- Try stopping before saying the last word in a verse. If your toddler has heard the same song or rhyme many times, he/she will want to finish the line. For example, "Row, row, row your..."
- Songs and rhymes are fun in the car, in the tub, and almost anywhere!

Examples of Songs and Finger Plays

Peek A Boo
Soooooo Big
Pat a Cake
Itsy Bitsy Spider
Wheels on the Bus
Row, Row, Row Your Boat
Twinkle, Twinkle
Ring Around the Rosie

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear
Old MacDonald
Farmer in the Dell
This Old Man
Rain, Rain Go Away
Mary Had a Little Lamb
Humpty Dumpty
Jack and Jill

Block Play

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Stack blocks with your child. Practice “my turn” and “your turn.” Say, “up” as you add each block and “down” or “boom” as they fall down. Knock the stack down with a toy car or a figure. Tell the toy, “Go-go-go; Boom; All fall down; Again?”

Make a train with the blocks and practice “Choo-choo.”

Put blocks into a shape sorter or make one of your own. Cut a block-sized hole into the top of a shoe box, oatmeal box, or any plastic container. Practice turn-taking. Tell the blocks, “in; boom; all done.” If you hold all the blocks in your lap, your child can practice “more; please; my turn.”

Play a sound imitation game with the blocks. Hold the blocks near your mouth and say a sound, then toss it into the container. Hand your child a block and see if he/she imitates the same sound.

VOCABULARY

Block
My turn
Your turn
Up
Down
In
Out
More
Please
All done
Again



Oral-Motor Exercises 1

Fun in the Mirror

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



Learning to use our mouths to say a word is a complex motor skill. It is one of the only motor skills we learn without the help of vision. You can watch your fingers learning to string beads, and you can watch your feet learning to climb steps; however, to see your mouths forming words, you need a mirror. A little bit of “mirror work” every day will help a child learn about the lips, teeth, and tongue, and how they all work together to make sounds and words. Since a child brushes his/her teeth every day and the bathroom mirror is handy, make Follow the Leader a daily game. Parents remember, keep this short and fun. Do a few each day and save some for later!

- Let's look at those beautiful clean teeth. Say, “eeee.”
- Can you make your teeth go bite-bite-bite?
- Make your mouth open very wide. Say, “ahhhhh.”
- Close your lips very tight. Say, “mmmm.”
- Make your lips a little circle. Say, “oooo.”
- Stick your tongue out. Say, “blah.”
- Make your tongue “dance” all around.
- Can your tongue go to the corner of your mouth? Now go to the other corner.
- Pretend you have ice cream on your lips. Lick top and bottom.
- Bounce your lips and say, “pop-pop-pop.”
- Blow kisses in the mirror.
- Kiss the mirror and look at your lip prints.
- Blow raspberries.
- Make funny faces with lots of mouth movement.

Oral-Motor Exercises 2



Fun at Snack Time

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague

There are lots of oral motor exercises which help children develop the muscle tone and coordination needed to make speech sounds. Snack time is an excellent time to improve oral motor skills. Try some of these parent directed activities. Say and do the following with your child:

- Hold a thin pretzel stick or cracker in your lips. Now hold a fat pretzel stick in your lips. *"Can you hold it while I count to five?"*
- Bite small pieces from a large cracker or a long pretzel stick. Parents cut food into small pieces to prevent choking. However, it is very important that toddlers learn to bite small pieces from a larger snack. Supervise to prevent mouth stuffing.
- Take tiny bites of a pretzel stick. Try this with the pretzel stick in different places to practice biting with different teeth. Hold it at the center of your mouth to use your front teeth. Hold it at the corner of your teeth to use your side and back teeth.
- Drink from a variety of cups. Try a different cup, mug, or glass every day. Attention parents: Sip cups with lids are wonderful when you don't want a drink to spill. However, it is very important that toddlers drink from regular cups every day to develop oral motor skills necessary for speech sound production.
- Lick foods, such as pudding or yogurt, from your lips.
- Hold a popsicle or lollipop about an inch in front of your mouth and stretch out your tongue to lick it.
- Drink through a straw.
- Drink a thicker liquid, such as a milkshake, through a straw.
- Blow on warm foods.

Eat different textures every day.

Smooth (pudding, applesauce)
Crunchy (crackers, pretzels)
Chewy (raisins, fruit snacks)
Lumpy (yogurt with fruit)

Oral-Motor Exercises 3

Watch What My Mouth Can Do!

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



We exercise to develop our arms and legs but don't think about building up muscle tone in our lips, cheeks, jaw, and tongue. By strengthening the muscles in our mouth and face, we develop the coordination needed for producing sounds and words.

Try these fun activities with your child to help develop oral motor skills. Remember, avoid small items that may be a choking hazard, and supervise these activities closely.

- Blow bubbles with your child. When introduced to bubble blowing, children may not initially have the breath support to blow a bubble through the wand. If someone catches a bubble, it is easier to blow it off the wand. As the bubble floats down, blow it back up again. Pop a bubble with your tongue.
- Blow horns, whistles, noisemakers, harmonicas, and party favors.
- Blow feathers and cotton balls. Turn a paper cup over and place a cotton ball on top. Blow it off.
- Blow through a straw. Now move a cotton ball across the table by blowing through the straw. You and your child can have a race.
- Make popping sounds with your lips ("puh-puh-puh"). Try and move the cotton ball with these sounds.
- Blow kisses.
- Kiss the mirror to make a lip print.
- Fill your cheeks up with air.
- Wash your own face with a warm wash cloth. Massage those cheeks and lips!
- Make motor noises with toy cars and trucks – "Brrrrrm!" (Attention parents: Motor noises that vibrate the lips are good oral motor practice. Avoid harsh, growling noises from the throat. These abuse the vocal cords.)

Should I Worry About Stuttering?

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



More than half of all toddlers learning to talk go through a stage where their speech is not smooth and flowing. It can be called stuttering, stammering, or choppy speech. However, Speech-Language Pathologists prefer to call this behavior “primary dysfluencies.” This is a NORMAL part of learning to talk, and usually occurs when children progress from single words to longer strings of words. Children exhibit dysfluencies in a variety of ways, such as repeating words (“my my my turn”), repeating sounds (“I want a c-c-c-cookie”), prolonging sounds (“thaaat’s mine”), or adding sounds (“Daddy uh uh go uh uh bye bye”). Here’s the good news – THIS IS A NORMAL STAGE IN LEARNING TO CONVERSE IN SENTENCES, AND MOST CHILDREN GROW OUT OF THIS STAGE EASILY.

The following are suggestions for coping with normal dysfluencies.

- Don’t call attention to the dysfluencies. Most young children are not aware that their speech is not fluent. Asking them to stop and start over will only cause frustration.
- Model a slower speaking pace for your child. Don’t ask your child to “slow down.” When given a good speech model, children automatically respond with a slower rate. You can also reduce the length of your sentences to give younger children an easier model for expressing ideas.
- Dysfluencies increase with stress, excitement, and increased activity. The holidays are a particularly busy time. Make sure that you and your child have some time each day in a quiet, relaxed setting to read a book together and talk slowly about the pictures.
- Children are rarely dysfluent when they sing. Sing-along games, finger plays, and simple poems/nursery rhymes (“Five little monkeys jumping on the bed...”) are fun and encourage fluency.

Let's Take Care of Our Voices

by Linda Mawhinney &
Mary Scott McTeague



We have two vocal cords in our larynx or voice box. When we talk the cords vibrate together. When we cry, scream, or make harsh noises, the cords can develop swelling at the points where they touch. Over time this swelling can become nodules (growths) on the vocal cords. When the vocal cords are swollen, or nodules are forming, the voice is usually hoarse and breathy. If children are abusing their vocal cords, you may find that their voice is weaker or more hoarse later in the day. If your child experiences a consistently hoarse voice, you need to consult with an ear, nose, and throat doctor. The following is a list of suggestions for maintaining a healthy voice:

- No yelling or screaming. Instead of yelling, think of another way to express anger, such as kicking a soccer ball or punching a pillow.
- Talk in a quiet voice. Give it a name such as “easy voice” so family members can easily remind you to use it. Eliminate background noise if it makes the child talk louder.
- No harsh “sound effects” such as motor noises, animal growls, or monster voices.
- Don't talk to people from far away or from another room. Get close. Instead of calling a person with your voice, blow a whistle or horn.
- Smoke, fumes, or pollen can irritate the vocal cords. Avoid any drinks or foods with caffeine which can also irritate vocal cords.
- Singing is OK if it is not too loud and you are not straining to hit very high or very low notes.
- A soft, quiet voice is better than a whisper. Whispering can strain the vocal cords because of the energy it takes to whisper loud enough to be heard.



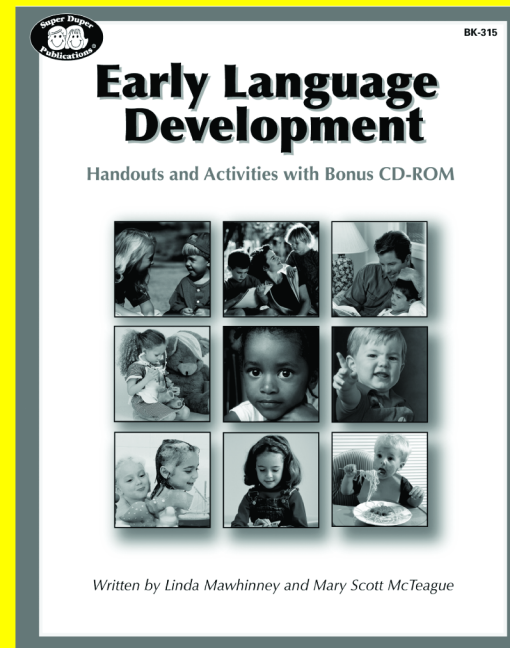
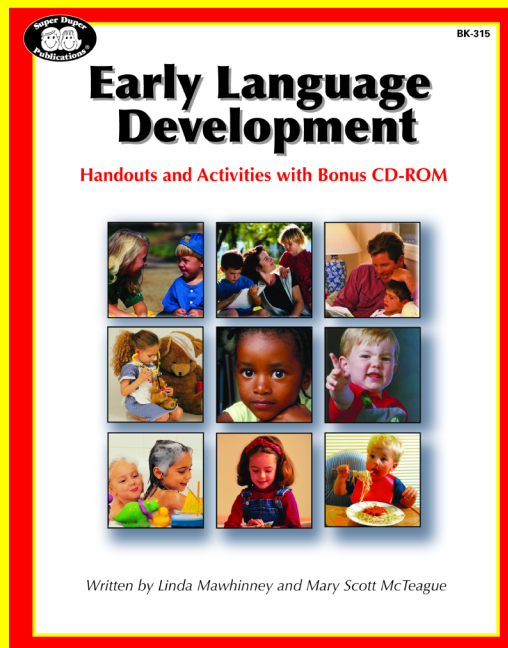
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