



## Strategies to Assist your Child with Communication Development



It is important to spend time talking with your child during a range of activities every day so they have an opportunity to practice understanding and using new words and sounds.

### Areas of Early Childhood Development related to Communication:

**Speech:** making sounds and sound patterns that enable us to communicate with spoken words.

**Receptive language:** understanding messages being shared with us.

**Expressive language:** sharing thoughts, ideas, needs, and wants using vocabulary and grammar.

**Social Skills:** both verbal and non-verbal skills that we use to communicate. This can be through gestures, body language and our personal appearance. These help us to communicate our messages, thoughts and feelings with others.



**Pre-Literacy:** the skills your child needs to help them learn how to read and write. This includes a child's engagement with books before they can read by exploring and talking with you about pictures, stories, and letters and their sounds.

**Voice:** movement of vocal cords coordinated with breathing to produce voice sounds (phonation). If you notice your child has a hoarse voice, high/low pitch, reduced or increased volume, or loss of voice, see your doctor or a speech and language therapist.

**Fluency:** the smoothness with which we speak. When a child does not speak smoothly we call this stuttering. Stuttering can present as repetitions of sounds, syllables, words or phrases, or pausing between or stretching sounds out for a long time. If your child is stuttering, see your doctor and a speech and language therapist.



### Strategies to assist your child at 18 months:

Speech	Receptive Language	Expressive language	Social skills	Pre-literacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Model speech sounds such as "ba ba ba" and simple words and repeat these over and over</li> <li>- Make faces and silly sounds in the mirror together</li> <li>- Talk to your child during activities at home such as bath time, make noises associated with actions e.g. make the noise of running water "sss" or splashing "sh"</li> <li>- Sing songs</li> <li>- Make animal sounds together e.g. "meow", "woof", "cheap"</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make eye contact when you talk to your child</li> <li>- Reduce any distractions in your surroundings e.g. turn of electronic devices, find a quiet place</li> <li>- Model new and old words to your child</li> <li>- Give them only 1-part directions e.g. "get the phone"</li> <li>- Let your child know what you are talking about by pointing or showing</li> <li>- Play games that include instructions e.g. ad d VN game</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk about what you are doing during everyday activities to model language e.g. during dressing, brushing teeth</li> <li>- Use simple language, 1-2 words at a time</li> <li>- Repeat the words/phrases your child says and add a word e.g. "dog" → "big dog"</li> <li>- Listen carefully to your child and respond to their gestures, looks and sounds by giving a word for what they might want to say</li> <li>- Talk to your child about topics that interests them e.g. food, animals, trucks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take turns making sounds and making facial expressions</li> <li>- Model play routines e.g. playing with a doll, pretending to talk on the phone, pushing trucks/cars</li> <li>- Model everyday routines and encourage your child to take turns during bath time, bed time, dressing</li> <li>- Put toys out of reach but in sight for child to point/request with voice and/or words</li> <li>- Wait and encourage your child to communicate e.g. if they are hungry</li> <li>- Model appropriate greetings e.g. saying hello and goodbye</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read simple stories to your child from picture books</li> <li>- Make up stories using picture-only books</li> <li>- Encourage your child to choose the books you read or look at</li> <li>- Use books with textures that your child can feel and interact with</li> <li>- Talk to your child about the story by pointing to pictures and words</li> <li>- Encourage your child to turn the pages of book while you read</li> <li>- Sing songs and nursery rhymes</li> <li>- Encourage your child to hold a pencil and draw</li> <li>- Talk and make sounds when you draw with your child e.g. draw lightning and make a 'boom' sound, draw snake and make a 'ssss' sound</li> </ul>

Further information and location of speech pathologists can be found at:

<http://trinhfoundation.org/our-resources/locations/>



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This resource was developed by students from the University of Newcastle Speech Pathology program, in coordination with the Speech Therapy team at Da Nang University of Medical Technology and Pharmacy and Trinh Foundation Australia.



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