

Interaction strategy: copy and add language

I respond to my child by copying and/or adding a word or a few words.

How does this strategy help?

- It helps to keep the interaction going.
- It lets my child know that I am interested, which encourages them to communicate more.
- It supports my child's understanding of words, phrases or sentences.
- If my child is using sounds, it shows them how to use words.
- If my child is using words, it shows them how to use their words in a phrase.
- If my child is using phrases, it shows them how to use their words in a simple sentence.

What should I do?

- Listen to the sounds and words that my child uses.
- Respond immediately when my child communicates by copying their facial expressions, gestures, sounds and / or words and adding a word or a few words.

Examples

- If my child frowns and says 'oh-oh!' when something breaks, I could frown and say 'oh-oh, **broken**'
- If my child looks at me, points and says "juice" when they want more juice, I could point and say "**more** juice?"
- If my child looks at me and says "daddy ball" when they want me to kick the ball, I could say 'daddy **kick the ball**'

Interaction strategy: match my language

I match my language to my child's level.

How does this strategy help?

- It allows my child to listen to language at the right level for him or her to learn.

What should I do?

- Listen to the sounds and words that my child uses.
- Notice if my child is mostly saying sounds, single words, phrases or sentences. If my child is mostly saying phrases or sentences, notice how many important words are in them.
- Mostly use language at the same level as my child, and sometimes use language that is slightly longer.

Examples

- If my child uses mostly sounds, I could use sounds (e.g. **"woof-woof!"**) and sometimes single words (e.g. **"dog"**).
- If my child uses mostly single words, I could use single words and sometimes phrases with two important words (e.g. **"dog's gone"**).
- If my child uses mostly phrases with two important words, I could use phrases with two important words and sometimes three important words (e.g. **"Dog's gone in the house"**).

NB Talk to your child's Speech and Language Therapist about the level of talking to use with your child for his or her stage of development. If your child has more difficulty with understanding than talking, you will need to match your language to your child's level of understanding instead of to their talking.

People Games

When you and your child have fun together, interaction becomes easier and there are more opportunities for communication.

By playing People Games, your child learns to pay attention to you, copy what you do, take a turn and give you a chance to take a turn, maintain interaction, start and finish the game, start a new game. Everything your child needs to know about communication can be learned in a People Game.

Find what your child loves to do and then make a game of it. Turn the physical activities you play with your child into structured and predictable People Games.

People Games have repetitive actions, sounds and words. Your child knows what his turn is and when to take it. They are fun and exciting, and they motivate him to keep the game and the interaction going.

1. Begin by watching your child and joining in with what he is doing, e.g., if he likes to run around a lot, join in and turn it into a game of chase.
2. Use specific words and actions to start the game, and use these same words each time you play. Also, repeat what you do and say as you play the game and end the game. Repeat the games many times during the day and with different people.
3. Pause at specific times during the game to let your child communicate with you by taking his turn. Offer him the chance to take the same turn at the same place every time you play, until he consistently takes his turn.
4. Help him take his turn by modelling and demonstrating what you eventually want him to do. The kind of turn he takes can change as his communication advances.
5. Be lively and animated to make the interaction last as long as possible. You can be the best toy he's ever played with!

People Games

to help your child learn about communication



Tickles



Peek a Boo
Hide and Seek



Horsey Horsey



Pillow Mountain



Row Row Row Your Boat



Swings & Swinging



Round and Round the
Garden



Chase