



LANGUAGE STIMULATION

TIPSHEET-5: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION

What is it? Creating opportunities for communication is exactly as it sounds, simply creating an opportunity for your child to communicate. I find this technique to be extremely useful as often children who are not talking have found excellent ways of getting what they want without communicating. We then become so good at recognising these signs, that without even knowing, we can anticipate all of our child's needs and wants, therefore removing any need to communicate.

What's involved? It involves setting up situations which encourage your child to communicate with you. It is important to allow your child time to problem solve what they may need to do, therefore don't rush too quickly to help your child.

Good times to use it: This technique works best when your child is highly motivated by the object or activity you are using. There are a number of ways you can use this technique. For example:

*Something is missing: you can give your child the "bubbles" but no bubble blower and then wait for your child to show or tell you what is missing OR, you can give your child their favourite DVD cover but no disc inside to play.

*Something unexpected: you can place your child's favourite toy out of reach (but still where they can see it) and then wait for them to show or tell you what they want.

*Stopping an activity: when playing with your child and their favourite activity, you can stop what you are doing and wait for your child to show you or ask for "more". For example, when pushing your child on a swing, you could swing your child for a short time then stop. You could then wait for your child to show you or tell you they want "more".

*Something wrong or funny: When playing with your child you could be silly and talk about playing with the "cow" when you are really playing with a "ball". If your child is not quite ready for that situation you could give them their favourite toy such as "bubbles" with the lid on really tight and wait for them to show or tell you they need some help. Alternatively you could place their favourite toy in a clear plastic container which your child cannot independently open and wait for your child to show or ask you for help.

REMEMBER: You may find that your child may still continue to have difficulty showing you or telling you what they want even after you have created opportunities and allowed time for them to problem solve the situation. It is important then, to assist your child and show or tell them what you would like them to do. This is particularly important as you do not want your child to become too frustrated or upset. For example with the bubbles you could encourage/prompt your child to give you the bubbles and model the word "help" or "bubbles" or alternatively if they are using augmentative communication you could encourage them to sign "help" or "bubbles" or give you the visual cue card/photo for "help" or "bubbles". You have then provided your child with the actions and language they need to use in order to receive what they want or need.

Kath Keiper (Paediatric Speech Pathologist; creator of "Can you sound like me?")

Visit www.chewchewchatter.com.au for more information

Chew Chew Chatter

A PO Box 655, Greensborough, VIC 3088

P +61 414 324 940

E kath@chewchewchatter.com.au

W www.chewchewchatter.com.au