

## Encouraging Oral Language

(Summary of suggestions from *Learning to Talk and Listen*)

### Children Need Reasons to Talk and Interesting Things to Talk About

- Think about the “talk times” during the day.
- Talk about what the child is doing and things that interest the child.
- Base conversations with children on activities and ideas that are of interest to the children themselves.
- Set up classroom and learning environments that encourage children to use interesting vocabulary and concepts.



### STORYTELLING

- Encourage children to tell stories about their own lives:
  - they try out new vocabulary,
  - use language to organize thinking,
  - exercise imaginations.
- Build on children’s ideas:
  - add new words,
  - model sentence structure
  - pose questions
  - elaborate on or extend what children say.



### NEW INFORMATION

- Introduce new and stimulating experiences (interesting objects, field trips)
- encourage talk about topics with rich, interesting content.
- talk about topics that stimulate their thinking.
- talk about past and future experiences

### PLAY

- Encourage children to take on new roles in play
- Use language in through:
  - songs,
  - plays,
  - show-and-tell,
  - dramatic play.



### EXTENDED CONVERSATION

- Talk to children personally, one-on-one or in a small group.
- Have conversations with each child that go back and forth multiple times.
- Build on what the child says by adding new words or new ideas.
- Ask questions that encourage children to use extended language



### MODELING LANGUAGE

- Teachers and families should use language that includes:
  - rich vocabulary,
  - abstract words and concepts, and
  - a variety of grammatical forms

**Source:** *Learning to Talk and Listen* is based on the research findings from *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel* (2009). Authors: Barbara Goodson and Carolyn Layzer.

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