



Wee Learn

Wee Explorers
(18 months - 3 years):
Fostering Language
Development Through Play



The first few years of a child's life are key to the development of speech, language and cognitive skills. For this reason it is important to create an environment that helps to develop speech and language skills that gives them all the stimulation, positive role modelling and human contact that they need.

Through play, simple daily interactions and experiences, we can help a child acquire new language and skills. By playing and allowing your child time and space to explore and interact in their own way, you allow your child to develop and learn in a fun and safe environment.

There are many simple activities that you can do with your child to develop their language skills.

- 1. Read Together.** Read to your child every day, several times a day. Discuss the illustrations when you're looking at books together. Ask your child to tell you what she sees. Ask her to point out specific items on the page. Read alphabet books to lay the groundwork for learning the ABCs.
- 2. Your Child Is Intelligent!** Treat your child like she's an intelligent person. (She is!) Consciously hold conversations with her. Ask for her opinions, likes, and dislikes. Listen attentively when she talks to you, and respond in a way that shows you understand what she's saying. Repeat what she says back to her to model appropriate pronunciation as well as good listening skills.
- 3. Encourage Details.** Add details to what your child says. "Yes, that's a bus. It's a blue and white city bus. It's really big!"
- 4. Model Proper Grammar.** Use proper grammar when you speak to model it for your child. She learns to speak (and write) from you
- 5. Use Complete Sentences.** Help expand your toddler's abilities by speaking to her in complete sentences. If she asks for "More banana?" say to her, "You want to have more banana." Model correct word order and clear pronunciation
- 6. Encourage Your Toddlers Imagination.** Provide your child with puppets, dolls, stuffed animals, and make-believe play materials such as scarves, hats, old clothes, shoes, recyclables for making costumes and props, blankets for building forts, etc. Make hand puppets out of paper bags decorated with markers, paper, and glue, or out of socks decorated with buttons, yarn, and thread. Show her how the puppets can have a conversation with each other or with you or her. Put on a puppet show

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