

Learning language every day

From a very young age, children begin to watch and listen to what is happening around them during everyday activities. They often learn new words just through overhearing conversations around them. They can be observing and taking in a lot more information than we realise! So the everyday routine activities that happen over and over again are actually a great opportunity for your child to learn new words and concepts.

Some routines to consider are getting dressed, bath time, meal time, driving in the car, reading books, bed time, doing the washing..... the list goes on! Because these activities happen *every day*, they are usually very predictable and your child knows what to expect. Your child doesn't have to think about what happens next, because they have learned the steps involved. This means that they can focus on other things, such as talking with Mum or Dad, rather than thinking about how do I get dressed.

Routine activities can then become a great opportunity for your child to learn new concepts and words, regardless of their age. For example during bath time, for younger infants and toddlers you could teach them the name of different body parts or describing words such as *wet, hot, cold*. For children 3-5 years you could talk about colours, talk about the sequence of events that we do to have a bath, or talk about what happens if water overflows from the bath!



How do you know what to talk about? Start by waiting and observing to see what your child is interested in. Then add words to talk about their interests and expand on these. We all learn new information more easily when it's something we're interested in!

Remember that you don't have to talk *all* the time. To get the most learning out of conversations, children need opportunities to have a say as well! It's not all about us adults telling children what to do, but it's about interacting with your child and making the activity into a conversation. Your child may interact with you in different ways depending on their age, such as pointing, reaching, saying one word, or a long sentence.

What can I do to help?

Think about your everyday routine activities and how you can make them into a conversation with your child. For example grocery shopping, washing the dog, watering the garden, packing up toys, walking to the park etc..

For younger children:

- Talk about what's happening *right now*, so your child can connect the words with what they are seeing, hearing and experiencing.
- Use a variety of different words, not just the same few words all the time!

For example when playing with a ball, one day you could talk about how it is a big ball and it's good for bouncing. The next day you could talk about how it's a red ball, and talk about kicking the ball.

For older children:

- Talk about things that have happened in the past or future
 - Give explanations as to why and how things happen
 - Use more sophisticated words
- For example when it starts raining, talk about why you have to shut the windows so water doesn't come inside, and what would happen if water came inside.*

If you're concerned about your child's speech and language development or any of the above areas, contact a speech pathologist to discuss whether assessment for your child is indicated.



Marion Langdon
Paediatric Speech Pathologist

0402 070 299
kidsinthehills.sp@gmail.com

PO Box 397, Ferny Hills DC Qld 4055
Ferny Fair Shopping Plaza
170 Patricks Rd, Ferny Hills

www.kidsinthehillsspeech.com
Like us on facebook!