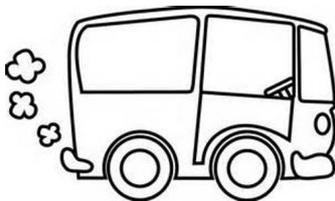


Driving in the car



Each week we seem to spend a lot of time in the car. Although we all dislike being stuck in traffic, it can also be a great opportunity to catch up and talk with your children. Some days this may be the only time you have to actually stop and talk with each other, before running off to do the next chore or school drop-off! Think about the time you have in the car and how you can use this to help encourage further conversation together. Here are some ideas to consider:

- Sing songs or nursery rhymes together. Make up your own versions. They could be as simple as “Old MacDonald had an elephant” or maybe silly like “Humpty Dumpty sat on a fish, I wondered what happened next?” These can help to develop awareness of rhyming, expand vocabulary and new sentence structures.
- Play “I Spy....” Change it up a bit by finding something that starts with a certain letter or sound, or a particular colour, shape or makes a sound. Or make it harder by ‘spying’ parts of an object (eg. the leaf on a tree).
- Counting and sorting games – pick a certain attribute and see how many objects you can find like this Think about colour, shape, taste, size, sound, smell (eg. count how many rectangular signs you can see). Great for discussion around vocabulary and counting practice!
- Hunting for letters – look out for letters on road signs and number plates. Then work out what sound the letter makes. Think of a word that starts or ends with that sound. (eg. the letter S’ says sssss, ‘sun’ starts with ‘s’, ‘mouse’ ends with ‘s’)
- Play “20 Questions” – each person takes a turn to think of a person, place, animal, food, object etc.. Then the rest of the family has to guess what it is by asking questions. For older kids, they can only be yes/no questions, but with younger kids you might like to give a few more clues! Great for expanding word knowledge and vocabulary.

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

More Seriously.....

If you’re not in the mood for games and songs, the car can also give opportunity to discuss and reflect on life experiences and events. For example, you can talk about what happened today at kindy, who did your child play with, why did they feel sad at lunchtime, what they could do next time when Johnny doesn’t share etc...

Using the Car for Speech Therapy

If your child does attend regular speech therapy, depending on what you’re working on you could also practice in the car. Ideas that work well in the car could include:

- Expanding vocabulary
- Using longer sentences to talk about what you can see out the window
- Using specific grammatical structures to describe what’s happening
- Practicing specific sounds in conversations
- Identifying words that start with a certain sound.

A word of caution though – the car is not always an ideal time to practice speech therapy activities given you as the driver can’t always give your full attention to your child. For example, they may practice the ‘wrong’ sound, rather than a new sound they are learning about. So always ensure other practice is completed at home as well!



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