

Communication Tips

2 Years



Things To Try

- Sing simple songs with actions "Itsy, bitsy spider", "Round and round the garden", "Where's Thumbkin", "Wheels on the Bus"
- Use 2 to 4 words when talking ("Look up! I see a cat", "He's up a tree")
- Hide objects under/behind pillows, blankets, furniture. Ask: "Where's the ball", "Find the teddy"
- Take turns tickling, feeding and rocking dolls and teddy bears
- Correctly repeat back what a child is trying to say (Child says "Mommy work" Adult says, "Yes. Mommy is at work.")

Teachable Moments

- Point to and talk about people and things when looking at books with large, clear pictures
- During everyday activities, talk about what you are doing using short phrases "Turn water on", "Mommy cut cake"
- Expand your child's world by introducing her to new people, by taking her to new places, by sharing toys with friends

Understands

- Searches with eyes when asked, "Where's mommy/daddy?"
- Understands more words than can say
- Points at body parts and familiar objects, "Show me your nose". "Where's the ball?"
- Points to pictures of familiar people and things when named
- Responds to questions correctly by saying "yes/yup/yeah" or "no"

Play

- Plays alone beside other children
- Beginning to take turns with other children (run & chase games, wrestling and rough & tumble)

Watch Out For

- Repeated ear infections (An audiologist should check a child's hearing when fluid has stayed in their ear(s) for more than 2 months)
- The child uses very few words or does not put words together

Expresses

- Produces animal sounds ("Moo for cow")
- Tries to say words that may not always be clear
- Combines two words into a phrase ("more juice". "Hi daddy")
- Uses some describing words ("Hot/cold", "big/small")
- Asks "what's that?" and "Where?"
- Uses words to show possession (mine, my toy)



Communication Tips

2½ Years



Things To Try

- Talk about opposites ("wet/dry", "tall/short", "heavy/light", "day/night")
- Introduce the child to new words in everyday life
- Talk about numbers and colours during daily activities ("You have 2 eyes.", "Mommy's car is blue.")
- Read favourite books to your child over and over, encouraging the child to fill in the words to help tell the story - (The itsy bitsy ____. Mary had a little ____.)
- Make intentional mistakes your child will notice and talk about it using "is/isn't", "does/doesn't, etc. (Child asks for milk and you give juice - "Oh this isn't milk!" or "You didn't want juice - you want milk!")
- Clearly say words and sentences the child says incorrectly emphasizing sounds and words (child - "That my blankie." - adult - "Yes, that's your blanket."

Teachable Moments

- Sorting laundry, talk about what clothing belongs to which person ("That's daddy's sock", "That's your shirt", "That's mommy's dress")
- Trade toys with other parents so your child can explore and talk about new things
- Take your child to a local library program or play-group to meet new people and experience new things

Understands

- Points to things described ("Show me what goes on your feet.")
- Knows the difference between "big" vs. "little", "hot" vs. "cold", "dirty" vs. "clean", etc.
- Understands that "he" refers to a boy and "she" refers to a girl
- Follows simple one-step directions ("Tidy-up your toys", "Take your shoes off")

Expresses

- Uses "-s" at the end of words when there is more than one ("Two dogs")
- Starting to use "-s" at the end of words to talk about things belonging to someone (That's daddy's shoe.")
- Answers "yes/no", "What", "Where" questions ("Is mommy at work?", "What is he/she doing?", "Where's the baby?")

Play

- Loves being with other children, but can have difficulty sharing and taking turns
- Has good attention span for playing with favourite toys, or reading stories
- Wants to "help" adults and imitates adult behaviour

Watch Out For

- A child who prefers to play alone and/or doesn't seek adult attention
- Multiple ear infections - (See your family doctor for a referral to an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor)
- A child acts frustrated when trying to talk
- A child who does not listen well



Communication Tips

3 Years



Things To Try

- Describe things in sentences ("I'm really hungry", "That's a HUGE bite!")
- Repeat what the child says, using correct sounds and sentences (child - "Me want doose", adult - "I want juice too. I like juice!")
- Play games together and take turns
- Count things around you
- Talk about how things are the same or different
- Arrange times to play with other children their age
- Give the child lots of chances to choose ("Do you want a pear or an apple for a snack? Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt?")

Teachable Moments

- Ask the child to be "a helper" and give them small jobs to do
- Read books with pictures and take turns telling little stories about the pictures
- Make-believe play with or without toys (Pretend to go shopping, dress-up, play with pretend toy garages, dollhouses, kitchen sets)
- Sort pieces of clothing together while doing laundry (Sort by colours, who it belongs to, where they go, type of clothing)

Understands

- Can put a toy "in", "on", and "under" when asked
- Follows two step directions ("Take off your shoes and put them in the closet")
- Understands "one" versus "all" ("Pick up a ball" vs "Pick up all the balls")
- Answers "where"? And "what...doing?" ("Where's Mommy" "What is the boy doing?")

Expresses

- Says 3 or more words in a sentence ("I want ball", "I can play Mommy.")
- Asks "Who?" "What?" "Where?" and "Why" questions
- Adults can understand most of what the child is trying to say
- Can clearly make these sounds in words: p,b,m,n,w,t,d,h,y, and vowels: a,e,i,o,u

Play

- Beginning to play co-operatively with other children
- Enjoys short periods of pretending and role-playing (playing house or going shopping)

Watch Out For

- Periods of stuttering lasting longer than 3 months; this includes repeating sounds, parts of words or whole words, and not being able to get a sound started
- A child who rarely makes eye contact with anyone
- A child who has difficulty playing with others
- A child who avoids being with others
- Struggle and tension while speaking



Communication Tips

4 Years



Things To Try

- Talk about what you and the child are doing/interested in
- Say clearly words and sentences the child has difficulty saying (child - "Him doing outside", adult - "Yes, he is - he is going outside.")
- Let the child make-up and tell stories using puppets you and your child make from socks or paper bags to act them out
- Read to your child and ask them questions about the story
- Play simple board/card games helping them to match and name colours/shapes, count, and follow directions (Snakes & Ladders, Go Fish)
- Add information for the child; "That's a daffodil & a tulip. They grow in Spring."
- Give the child opportunities regularly to play with children his own age

Teachable Moments

- Involve the child in planning daily activities; talk about things you need for a birthday party, for a weekend trip or going to the beach
- While brushing teeth, practice making faces in the mirror (Pucker your lips like a fish, wag your tongue back and forth, touch different teeth with your tongue)

Understands

- Follows three-step instructions ("Get your boots, put them on and go outside")
- Understands and remembers details about a story
- Can anticipate and tell you "What do you think will happen next?"

Expresses

- Tells stories using words, including details in a logical sequence
- Understands and remembers details about a story told to them
- Can answer questions like "What do you think will happen next?"
- Says sentences of four or more words in length; ("I'm hungry dad", "I jumped really high!", "I want to go home")
- Can clearly make these sounds in words; k,g,f,s,z,sh

Play

- Beginning to play with more challenging toys (building blocks, construction games, puzzles, computer games)
- Enjoys more play time with other children
- Pretend play is well developed

Watch Out For

- If a child has a rough, raspy voice lasting longer than one month, ask your doctor for a referral to an ear/nose and throat doctor to check the child's vocal cords.
- If other people have a hard time understanding what your child says



Communication Tips

5 Years



Things To Try

- Play simple board/card games (Checkers, Snap, Tic Tac Toe)
- Let the child make up stories to tell or act out for you
- Talk about what's happening in your life (yesterday, today, tomorrow.)
- Let your child dress up like you and play grown-up
- Ask your child to tell you about their day (What was the activity today? Did you paint or colour today? What story did you hear today?)

Teachable Moments

- Involve the child in "jobs" around the house - they love to help
- Have your child help "bake", talk about the amounts you measure, what order the ingredients are added, and how long your "treat" will bake
- When playing, ask your child thinking questions, such as "Why?", "How?", "What if...?"
- Read longer stories to him and talk about why/how things happened, moral to the story, etc.

Understands

- Understands long verbal direction; ("When grandpa arrives, tell him I'm outside and help him take his bag upstairs")
- Understands many descriptive words; ("sort/hard", "long/short", "tallest/shortest", "top/bottom")
- Understands "3"; ("Give me 3 forks")
- Points to colours; ("Show me the green one")

Expresses

- Uses complete sentences, usually grammatically correct
- Uses these sounds but may be hard to say, "r", "th", "ch", "v".
- Explains what words mean
- Repeats the days of the week in sequence
- Explains reasons and answers questions like, "What would you do if...?"

Play

- Acts out long stories with a plot and play roles of characters
- Plays cooperatively with friends for long periods

Watch Out For

- A child who appears "shy" and won't interact with other children or adults
- A child who does not use complete sentences
- A child who has trouble following directions

