

Tempt your Child to Communicate

As parents our strongest drive is to care for our children and to meet their needs. When we do this too well, we rob our children of the chance to try, to fail, to succeed, and most importantly to learn.

Sometimes, we need to sit on our hands and **wait**. By waiting, we allow our child the time to think about how he/she is going to make his/her needs known.

Here are some creative ways to “**tempt**” your child to communicate through everyday activities, giving him/her lots of opportunities to learn.

Supper time/Snack time:

- Eat a favorite food in front of your child. **Wait** until your child requests it in some way before giving him/her some.
- Forget to give your child a spoon for his/her cereal. **Wait** for a reaction. Then label the item as you give it to your child.
- Give you child a small amount of food/drink that he/she likes. **Wait** until your child requests before giving him/her more. Say “more ____” as you give it to your child.
- Offer your child food that he/she does not like. **Wait** for a reaction. Then say, “Yucky!” or “no” as you take away the food.
- Place your child’s snack in a clear container that your child cannot open. Give it to your child. **Wait** for a reaction. Say “open” as you open the container.

Play time

- Open a jar of bubbles, take the wand out and **wait** for your child to indicate that he/she wants you to blow. After blowing once, replace the lid tightly and give the closed jar to your child. **Wait** for a reaction before starting over again.
- Put a toy in a see through container. Hold the container up so your child can see it. **Wait** for your child’s reaction.
- Put a toy in a clear jar that your child cannot open and give it to your child. **Wait** for the child to request your help. Add simple language like “open” or “help”.
- Activate a wind-up toy and let it run down. **Wait** for your child’s reaction.
- Share books with your child (pop-up, and “touch and feel” books). **Wait** for your child’s reaction before turning the pages.
- While playing with a toy (such as blocks) gives your child a different object (such as a toy animal or car). **Wait** for your child’s response.

Others:

- Create silly situations.
 - 1. Put your child in the bathtub without any water. **Wait** for a reaction. Add language like “water in”.
 - 2. Leave your child’s socks on and slowly start putting him/her in the tub with water, allowing him/her time to react.
 - 3. Put your child’s coat on yourself. **Wait** for your child’s response.
- When getting dressed, put on two different socks, put the shirt on backwards, or leave one shoe on and one shoe off and start to leave the house. **Wait** for a reaction. Add language like “oops!” , “not same”, “shoe on”.
- Give your child choices of two items whenever possible. Example: clothes, food, toys, and wait for a response.
- Put items out of reach but within view of your child. **Wait** for your child to request.

Don’t make these tasks a torture for your child and for yourself! Give your child time and lots of opportunities to use language and communication attempts. Make him/her successful. Always repeat the word and words he/she could have used to be clearer.

For example,

You give your child only a sip of juice in his cup. The cup is empty now. He hands you the cup. You say, “thank you”. You **wait** and *act dumb* because he’s trying to tell you he wants more. He thinks and then says “mo”. You say, “Oh, you want more juice.” Your child is now happy because you give him more juice.

Don’t be afraid to have fun!