

Respond to Your Child

When you get face to face and wait watch and respond, it is easier for you to pay attention to what your child is interested in or what your child is trying to tell you. Respond immediately and with interest to what your child is trying to tell you. Responding will help you and your child connect more easily and share the moment. Your child will also be encouraged to communicate again. Here are some ways to **respond to your child**.

Be a part of the Play: Play is one of the best ways to connect with your child and respond to your child. Play creates lots of opportunities for fun and communication. The more enjoyable the play, the more likely your child is to stay in the interaction. The longer your child is interacting, the more opportunities there are to learn language. Try to get involved in the play, make fun sounds, get down on the floor with your child, have your own toys, play like a child, and have fun.

Imitate – or copy- what your child says and does: Imitate your child's actions, sounds, facial expressions and words. Imitation lets your child know you're listening and encourages your child to communicate.

Interpret your child's message: Say it as your child would if your child could. For example, if your child puts his arms up to be picked up, you could say "up". You are putting your child's message into a word that he can learn and use when he's ready.

Make a comment: Talk about what your child is interested in by using simple, clear words, and sentences.

Follow Through: If your child has made a request, respond **immediately**. For example, if your child has wiggled her body to request another push on the swing- interpret her message (you could say "push" or "swing" or "wheee!") and then give your child a push.

Responding to your child helps you connect with your child in the interaction, lets your child know when they communicate good things happen, and give your child confidence to communicate.