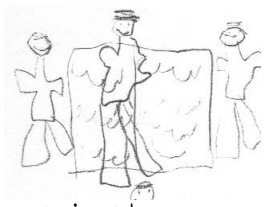


Supporting Oral Language Development



The biggest influence on children's oral language development is the emotional climate surrounding them. Children need to feel safe, cared for, valued, and respected. One factor that contributes to emotional support for children's language development is responsiveness. Too often as busy adults we multitask several other activities while we are talking with children. In order to enhance their language development we need to stop and really pay attention to the child.

Responsiveness is based on verbal and non-verbal cues. The whole point is to tell the child "I notice you, I am listening to you."

Non verbal cues



Physical signals –

Research shows that 93% of what we understand comes from tone of voice, facial expression and body language.

Tone of voice conveys about 38% of the message we are sending.

Body and facial expression conveys about 55% of our message.

Only 7% of what is understood comes from the actual words we are speaking during a conversation.

Eye contact – actually stop what you are doing and look at your child while you are having a conversation

Face to face interactions – get down on your child's level. Looking up at someone bigger than you can be very intimidating.

Verbal signals

Extensions – show you are listening by adding on to what your child says.

Child: "I played with Tim today." Parent: "You and Tim seem to have fun together."

Reflections – repeat or mirror back your child's words to show you hear him.

Child: "This is my favorite book." Parent: "This one is your favorite!"

Open ended questions – ask something that takes more than yes or no to answer it.

Think of questions that begin "Why?" "How" or "What do you think?"

All of these verbal and non-verbal cues send a message to your child that you are actively participating and valuing what he says and thinks.

