

Family Activities



Readiness Skill: Speaks in five to six word sentences

As preschool children transition to kindergarten they are beginning to use more complex sentences made up of more than five to six words. Children at this age are also developing the listening skills they will need as a part of the communication process. Parents can help model this skill by speaking in complete sentences and encouraging their child to use more than just one word responses to questions. Help your child practice this important skill by trying the fun activities below.

Mystery Bag

A fun way to spark conversation with your child is to employ the tactics of mystery and wonder. Without your child seeing you, take a plain paper bag or other opaque bag you may have on hand and place an object inside it such as a piece of fruit, rock, leaf, toy, or other household object or item from nature. Invite your child to guess what is inside the mystery bag by encouraging him or her to ask questions about what may be inside the bag. Your child will use the clues from their questioning to guess what mystery object is inside the bag. At first the questions may be simple containing only a few words. However, over time your child will begin to ask more complex questions with your help and encouragement. Watch as your child's face lights up in wonder once the mystery object is revealed.



Show and Tell

Show and tell is a classic game that helps promote language and communication development. You can involve the entire family with this activity by scheduling "Show-Tell" nights. Invite each family member to bring an object of their choice for sharing. Big brother may choose to bring a rock he found walking on the way home from school or dad may choose to bring a photo of a bird he snapped a picture of using his cell phone at the park over the weekend. Each family member takes a turn sharing some information about the object and its significance. Always stress the importance of speaking in complete sentences so that your child will begin to see how sentences are made and structured. Over time he or she will begin to use more complex sentences in his or her conversations.



Puppet Play

Young children are fascinated by puppets. Puppets can be used as teaching tools as well as a means to spark conversation and communication in children. Sometimes children may be reluctant to speak with adults yet more inclined to speak with a puppet while engaged in pretend play. They will begin to use sentences in the dialogue they are having with their puppet. There is no need to rush out to the store to purchase a puppet. You can help your child make their very own puppet using something as simple as an old mismatched sock. Take the sock and use markers to draw eyes, nose and mouth or decorate using glue and other craft scraps you may have on hand.



Encouragement Goes a Long Way

Encourage your child to use more than just one or two word responses to questions or to ask questions that do not require a one word response. For example after reading a story ask, “What did you like best about this story?” instead of, “Did you like this story?” You can also promote more complex sentences by encouraging your child to elaborate on their sentences. For example, while reading with your child you can ask him or her to tell you the color of a shirt one of the characters in the story is wearing. He or she may respond with one word such as “blue.” In this case you would elaborate by saying something like, “Yes, the boy in the story is wearing a blue shirt.” The more you practice, model, and encourage the more likely your child will begin to consistently use complete sentences.

