

Early play activities

Hide and Seek



Show your child a toy then place it under a towel or small blanket and encourage child to find the toy. Once your child is finding the toy, place 2 covers in front of your child and hide a toy under 1 cover. Encourage your child to find the toy. Hide toys in different places e.g. under stacking cups, in boxes, under furniture.

Give and Take games

Play giving and taking games with her/his toys. Encourage your child to hand you things and give them back. Rolling the car/ball back and forth to each other.



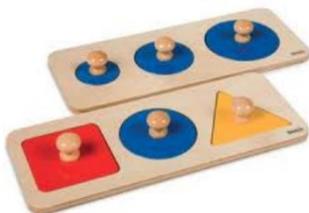
Stack blocks & Stacking cups



Stack blocks on top of each other. Build a tower, and then give your child a turn. But don't be surprised if she would rather knock down yours than build one on her own. Encourage your child to help you build the tower, placing one block on top of another block. Use different materials to stack e.g. building blocks, stacking cups, cardboard boxes.



Puzzles: Form boards



Present your child with simple form boards, 3-4 inset puzzle. Encourage child to take the insets out, they may want to play and explore insets first, bang them together. Invite child to place insets into form board. Give her one inset at a time to place, some insets are more difficult to place, your child may need help putting them in.

In and Out

Give your child plastic containers with objects in it e.g. rattlers, balls, blocks.

- First encourage your child to take objects out of the container. Take insets out of form board, Large wooden pegs out of peg board
- Encourage child to place objects into containers/boxes. Use different size containers/boxes. Place shapes into simple shape sorters, post discs into posting pig, post objects into round hole in shoe box, make the hole smaller as your child understands posting.



Ring stacker

Start with two or three rings on the ring stacker. Encourage your child to remove the rings. Make it easier for him/her by tilting the ring stacker when he/she is trying to take off the rings or pull the ring almost off and let the child pull it the rest off the way off. Once our child can take rings off the ring stacker, encourage your child to place rings onto ring stacker.

1. What's in the bag? Common objects and animals

Encourage your child to take objects from a bag, name the object and demonstrate the Lámh sign (if possible). Allow your child time to play and explore the objects e.g. throw ball, shake rattle, brush hair. If your child does not play with object functionally, demonstrate action e.g. pretend to drink from cup, feed yourself with spoon. Encourage child to imitate your actions. When your child becomes familiar with common objects you can change objects in bag, put animals in bag, again name animals and demonstrate lámh sign for animals, make sounds of the animal.



Place two objects in front of your child. Ask 'show me ball, car, book, cup, spoon, phone, etc.? Encourage your child to select object and place it in the bag. Your child may need a prompt to put the object into the bag.

2. Doll/Teddy Play



Introduce your child to pretend play. Play with your child's teddy bears/dolls. Encourage your child to kiss the bear goodbye or give her a hello hug. When leaving the house you could tell him to wave bye bye to the teddy bear. Pretend to give the teddy/doll a drink, brush hair, feed doll/teddy, put teddy to bed, etc.

3. Matching Objects: when your child is familiar with and discriminating objects

Later you can start introducing your child to matching objects from object bag. Place 2-3 common objects (2-3) in front child, show your child an object and encourage your child to find the matching object from group of objects. Point out they are the same.



Play the naming game.

Name body parts, common objects and people. This lets your Child know that everything has a name and helps her begin to learn these names. For example, use bath time/dressing time to point to some body parts and say them with your child. Nose, ears, arms, legs, tummy, toes....

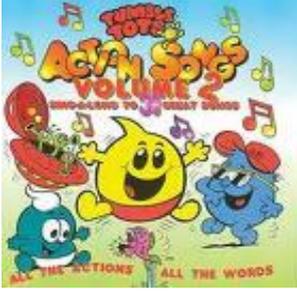


Story Time

Read books together. Let your child turn pages in books. This allows your child to become familiar with how books are read, by turning the pages. Sit your child on your lap and read stories with simple action words and pictures. Stories with repetitive phrases are fun, like 'Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me I'm the Gingerbread man!'



Exploratory play



Action songs/Nursery Rhymes

Repeat action songs with your child so they can learn the actions, i.e. Head shoulders knees and toes. Play simple clapping games such as holding his hands and clapping them to the simple rhythm of songs such as twinkle, twinkle little star. Bang on a drum and encourage your child to imitate you. Imitate your child's actions.

Music from the kitchen

Make fun instruments from up-turned pots and pans with wooden spoons, or two saucepan lids for cymbals. Use your instruments to explore different concepts such as loud and soft, fast and slow.

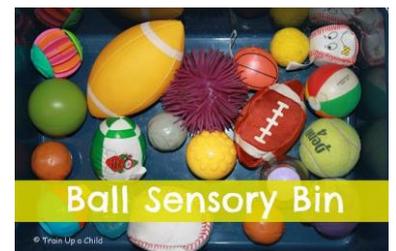


Water fun

A great summer activity! Fill a low, wide container with a few centimeters of water and place it on the ground. Float objects in the water and let your reach reach and splash. Always supervise children when playing with water.

Tactile box

Put together a box of items that are fun to feel, poke, and squeeze. You might include plastic margarine tubs, an old sock, tissue paper to crumple, measuring cups of different sizes, a turkey baster, a nylon scarf, an egg carton, and paper cups.



Outside fun

Take your child into the back yard or to the park. Let your child feel different surfaces, let them sit and crawl on the grass, feel stones and leaves with supervision - some objects can look like a tasty treat! Crawl through tunnel, try out the swing and slide, play with balls.

Baby's First Words Are Nouns!



Ideas for encouraging Vocalisation

Aims

- to encourage your child to make noises with his/her voice
- to babble
- to initiate babble with an adult
- to have babble 'conversations'

Activities

Exciting Toys

Exciting toys can help elicit sounds. Toys that have an element of surprise are most likely to make a child vocalise. Whenever your child does so, accidentally or intentionally, reward him immediately.

Examples of suitable rewards are cuddles, physical contact, push-pop toys, buzzers and flashing lights. Accompany these with verbal praise. It is sometimes helpful to keep a few objects especially for rewards, so your child learns to make the association between vocalising and being rewarded.

Imitation of your child's vocalisation

When your child babbles, make eye contact/get within his visual field and copy him to help him learn that what he does has an effect on what you do.

It is important to imitate any sound your child makes so that he understands his/her sounds get a reaction and starts having early 'conversations' with sound.

Representational Noises

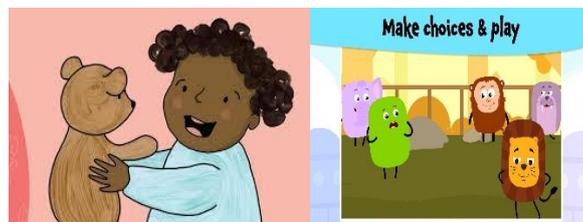
Encourage your child's use of symbolic noises by modelling/using the noises yourself as below:

- using sounds that are associated with feelings in appropriate situations e.g.
 - Oooooooooooh! (e.g. when hurt)
 - Mmmmmm! (e.g. tastes good)
 - Ahhhhhhhhh! (e.g. when bubbles go up)
 - Grrrrrrrrrr! (e.g. when pretending to be angry)
 - Shhhhhhhh! (e.g. when putting teddies to sleep)

Accompany these sounds with appropriate gestures, facial expression and exaggerated intonation.

- using sounds to accompany actions and events e.g. phone ringing, car beeping, water splashing, wind blowing.
- make appropriate noise when playing with toy animals, cars, trains etc. Encourage your child to join in and copy you.

Baby's First Words Are Nouns!



Telephones

Encourage use of vocalisation by pretending to talk on toy telephones or having puppets/action figures talk to each other. This is also good for practising turn-taking in conversation.

Singing

Singing and laughing are other ways of encouraging vocalisation. Sing simple songs with babble words and encourage your child to join in (e.g. la la la, nonsense sounds).

Mirror Work

Use a mirror large enough for 2 people. Make silly faces and noises together (e.g. raspberries, lip-smacking noises, talking through pinched nose).

Making Choices

Try to increase the number of opportunities for your child to communicate **with** you. Creating lots of opportunities for choice making most easily does this.

For example allow your child to choose:

- What he wants to eat
- What tv show he wants to watch
- Which toy he wants to play with
- To play inside or outside (weather dependent)
- What clothes he would like to wear
- Whether he wants to brush his teeth or his hair first
- What toys he would like in the bath
- Which story he would like read to him
- Which piece he wants to put in the puzzle first



Choice can be incorporated into just about every activity you do with your child. Allowing him to choose shows him the value of communicating with you – when he tells you what he wants, he gets it, that he does in fact have some control over you and his environment.

Most of the time this choosing will be just between 2 choices. In this case, it is easiest just to hold up the 2 objects (or objects representing the activities) and say, 'What do you want? X or Y?' This way you are providing a model for your child to copy and therefore encouraging him/her to use the true word.

Waiting - try not to anticipate his needs. Let your child get a little frustrated before you step in to solve the problem or to help. Try to wait for a look towards you or a change in sound before you step in. Let your child know that you have stepped in because he looked at you or because you heard him ask for 'help' (just a slight change in vocalisation will do). Tell him 'Mummy help'. Over increase the time your child has to wait before you step in to help.

Baby's First Words Are Nouns!



Understanding and Use of 'More'

Aim

- For your child to link the word/sign/symbol for more with the repetition of a favourite activity or object (e.g. more tickles, more biscuit)
- For your child to be able to say/sign/give a symbol to request 'more' and the activity they want more of (i.e. using specific vocabulary).

Developing Understanding of 'More'

When your child wants more of something – say 'More?' with an exaggerated intonation. Then give him some and say 'more' or 'more tickles/bubbles/biscuit' (whatever he is having more of).

You can show him a symbol and/or lámh sign in addition to saying the word 'more'. Gradually encourage him to say/sign/exchange a picture or symbol.

Using 'More'

Think of the opportunities throughout the day that your child has where he enjoys objects or activities manipulate those opportunities so that you create the need for him to request more. Some ideas are listed below.

You may need to move your child's hands to make the sign for more (one hand is a fist and the other hand covers the top of the fist) if he does not copy you or give a symbol/picture to exchange. Encourage him to do this until he does so by himself.

Bubbles

Blow a few bubbles. When they have all burst, say 'more?' and blow some more. After a few times, leave a gap between the time the bubbles have popped and the time you ask 'more?' Gradually, wait until your child asks.

Rough and Tumble

Any activity your child enjoys can be used to elicit 'more' (e.g. rough and tumble, being tickled, being chased, being pushed on a swing, singing a song, etc.).

Moving Toys

Using a wind-up toy, musical box, spinning top, etc., your child has to ask when he wants it to move again.

Puzzles

Give your child a simple lift-out puzzle to do but pass him one piece at a time. Give him the next piece when he asks for 'more'.