



Lisa M. Phillips, M.S. CCC/SLP
1048 Lancaster Street, Leominster, MA 01453
Telephone (401) 465-3004 • www.phillipsspeechtherapy.com

Developing Oral Language Skills

Spoken language comes naturally to the young brain. However to master language, the child must consistently hear it. Infants and young children will then begin to make connections between words and objects or actions. Listening is the ultimate groundwork for speech and eventual reading skill. The development of a child's oral language can be enhanced through the following activities.

1. Talk to your child.
 - Talk about the day's events, books, stories. Tell the child whatever you are doing.
 - Ask child to explain any activity that you are doing at home (e.g. ironing, trimming bushes, sorting laundry, etc). Don't settle for single word answers.
 - Ask child to point out objects in the environment and name or describe them.
2. Read to your child.
 - Read at least 20 minutes a day with child on your lap.
 - Take turns talking about what was read.
 - Provide child with books full of large, colorful pictures; point out objects as you read.
3. Reading books should be interactive.
 - Let child make up version of what will happen next in a story.
 - Purposefully misread and give the child an opportunity to correct you.
 - Act out a story or create a puppet show.
 - Reinforce the direction of reading (left to right, top to bottom).
4. Cultivate phonological awareness with auditory and visual word games.
 - Play rhyming games.
 - Play the broken record game: say a word very slowly and break it into syllables, then have your child repeat the word at a normal speed.
 - Have a child draw pictures and make up a story while you write it down.
5. Learning starts with a 1:1 match followed by patterns and sequence.
 - Use activities with the child, which involve counting: "Bring me one cup and two plates. Put the napkin next to one plate." Have child repeat instructions.
 - Have child match letters to items in a room that begin with that letter.
 - Use activities with pattern and sequence – posters, checkers, dominoes, etc.
6. Provide a print rich home and school environment.
 - Videotapes, audiotapes and the computer can help with the effort of learning to read while making it fun and worthwhile.
 - Keep television watching to a minimum.
 - Label environment with words. Children are then able to better make connections between oral language and the written word.