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Strategies to Stimulate Receptive Language

Parallel Talk

Talk about your child's actions and those of other people. Talk to your child when your child is playing, riding in the car, bathing, or doing any favorite activity. This helps your child learn to connect what the child sees, hears, does, and feels with the words to describe them.

Expansion

When your child speaks or points to an object, be sure to imitate the sound and then give your child the label (the name of the object). For example, if your child points to a dog, give the label, "dog."

Monitor your speaking rate and stress

Talk at a speed your child can understand. You may need to talk more slowly than you usually do. Stress the words you are teaching by saying them louder, longer, or in a high voice. Produce your words clearly without exaggerating them too much. Research shows that adults generally speak at a rate of 160 words per minute, but the average elementary-aged child can process information at a mere 120 words per minute, which is the speaking rate of Mr. Rogers ([Advance, 2008](#)). Younger children require *even more* time than that!

Extension

Enlarge on your child's topic by adding related information to whatever your child is talking about. If your child shows you a dog, talk about what a dog sounds like or eats.

Keep it fun!

Don't ask your child too many questions! Comment on your child's activities, speak clearly, and provide more information. Also, don't make your child imitate all your words. Language stimulation should be fun, not work.

Adapted from by Nancy Williams, M.S. CCC-SLP (2003).