



Talking with Your Child

Your child was born to learn! From birth, your child is learning language and ways to express himself! Learning language will help your child be a good reader and writer. With your help, she will do better in school. Try these easy and fun activities with your child:

YOUR INFANT:

- ◆ Talk to your baby all day long. Feeding and dressing times are great times to talk to your child. Use short simple sentences: "Mmmm. Good bananas! Do you want more?"
- ◆ Play with your baby every day. Play peek-a-boo. Wait for her to smile, laugh, repeat your voice sounds, or cover her face with her hands. Then do it again.
- ◆ Sing songs like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and "Pat-a-Cake." Your baby will love your voice! You can make up your own words and your own songs too!
- ◆ Your baby is learning to use her voice to let you know what she needs and wants. Pay attention to her when she cries or makes sounds. Be sure to respond to her cries. Repeat her "words." Answer her with simple words.

YOUR TODDLER:

- ◆ Talk to your child about what you are doing during the day. "I'm washing the dishes. Wash, wash, wash! Can you help?" Let him "help" you with daily chores. Listen for him to repeat your words. Clap and smile when he does.
- ◆ Play games with your toddler and his toys. Take turns rolling a ball back and forth. Say words like, "Roll it! Catch it! Throw it!" Clap and smile when she takes turns with you.
- ◆ Sing or say nursery rhymes and other rhymes you know or have read. Once your child knows the rhyme, let her finish a line: You say, "Jack and Jill went up the ..." and let your child say, "hill."
- ◆ Listen and respond to what your child says. Use simple, clear language. Show your child that you are truly interested: "Yes, that's a truck. It's big, isn't it?"
- ◆ Read to your toddler every day. Let your child act out parts of the story. Ask simple questions about the story. Get your child talking about what he remembers.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- ◆ Read to your preschooler every day. Ask questions about what happens in the story. Let her guess what she thinks will happen next.
- ◆ Your preschooler is full of questions. Answer them and be sure she understands you. Ask questions back to her. Give her clues to help her answer you.
- ◆ Have pretend conversations with your child. Pretend you are ordering an ice cream cone at the ice cream store and he is the ice cream scooper.
- ◆ Let your child talk on the phone to family and friends.
- ◆ Look at family photos with your child. Ask your child if she remembers the event. Ask your child to tell you about it. Help your child tell the story by talking about the photo. For example, if the photo is of your child's birthday party, talk about who was there and what happened at the party: "You had a Thomas the Train Cake. It was chocolate. You loved it!"
- ◆ Tell stories to your child. Tell real life stories and stories that you know.