

# Chat & Play: Spring Language Activities for Kids

**Alaine:** [00:00:00] Hey, welcome to raising deaf kids. Are you tired of spending your precious time after the kids go to bed Googling and scrolling Instagram for answers like, how do I learn sign language? Do you feel overwhelmed by all of the decisions that you have to constantly make for your child? Hey, I'm Elaine. I'm a mom of three littles, two of whom are deaf.

I remember what it felt like to learn that my child was deaf for the first time. It felt like the rug got tore out from under my feet, and I was falling without Annette in sight. How did I get through those crazy early years of learning new ways of life without completely going insane by creating solid foundations for my child of communication strategies, academic skills and routines at home?

And I can't wait to share it all with you. Together, we're going to build a strong foundation that [00:01:00] will support your child and help them thrive. So put down that to-do list. Close out that a SL app for now and let's get started.

Hello. Hi everyone. We are here and live and rolling. Let me pick up my other screen real quick so I can see what's happening. Addition to talking to all of you guys here today. Alrighty, let's find us. How's everybody doing today?

Okay, here we are. Okay, great. I hope everyone is doing fantastic and we are here. So fun to talk about springtime language activities for your kids, and this will be really fun. First of all, I want you to just briefly [00:02:00] tell you why this is important to practice the language skills. Sorry, am I. Nail polishes off of two fingers.

Why this is important to practice language skills. Number one, why even do this? And then number two, I'm gonna give you five different springtime language activities. So they're really fun. We'll engage any and all kids, and I'm gonna give you ideas of what words to practice during those activities. Okay?

And I also have all this on a handout. And at the end of this live, I'm gonna post the handout in the comments on this live so that you can grab the handout. Um, so you don't have to take notes, you don't have to remember every, everything that was in here. Um, you can just grab the handout with all the activities and what you can be practicing during those activities.

All right. Well, first of all, why even do this? [00:03:00] Like, why do we need different activities? Why in the heck like, are we talking about this today? We're talking about this today? Because how you practice language with your kids matters. How you practice it matters. Okay? It is not enough, especially when we're talking about our kids with hearing loss.

Um, they are already behind a little bit in language skills based on their age group. Um, which we know that's not a surprise for any of us. Um, we also know that for kids with hearing loss, in order to most effectively learn language, you have to be intentional about them learning and about practicing that language so they don't learn as well in what we call incidental learning, which is how, if you have a typically hearing child.

That is how they do a lot of their language learning is they literally listen [00:04:00] to you talk and they pick up on it. Okay. Um, our kids who have hearing loss, especially kids who have hearing loss from birth and never kind of had the full spectrum of speech sounds, um, from the, from the beginning, um. Need a bit more targeted intentional practice, which means you need to, you know, sit down with them and practice, but in a playing way that feels like they are playing and is not super structured, but is really giving them an experience with language.

Okay? Because that is what we also know with all kids Learn language best. When they have an experience with it, instead of just like memorizing words, you know, memorizing letters. If they actually experience it and use it in real time, they learn it faster and they learn it better. And this goes for all kids.

Okay. [00:05:00] And I wanna say I use all these strategies with my typically hearing little girl. So, um, in case you don't know me. I have two boys with cochlear. They were both born with profound citral neural hearing loss from birth. They have cochlear. One of them talks, one of them signs a SL. So all of these activities that you do can also be signed.

So you can use spoken speech with these. You can use a SL signs with these or a combination, A both, which is like actually what we do. And I have a third child who is my little girl who is typical hearing, and I used all these strategies with her. As well. So you can use these with typical hearing kids as well.

And it really like exponentially grows their language really fast, but it also works really well with deaf kids and you know, kids with hearing loss. Um, like I said, you can do these talking or signing, but it is really important to intentionally teach your child language and the way that you practice.

It [00:06:00] matters to them. It matters in them learning and learning. Faster and more efficiently. So that is why we're doing this today. And kids need an experience with language. And so why are we doing the pairing? The language with the activities is because that is how kids learn. Kids learn through plank.

Kids do not learn through sitting at a table and going over a list of words. It that has no meaning to them and no context. And I am also going to. Challenge you, that that is actually not how adults learn language either. That the best way to learn language for kids and adults actually is through experiencing the language and using it in real time and doing activities with it to put it into context and, uh, putting meaning to it.

And, and this is kind of what I did when I used to teach high school Spanish. So I am a language [00:07:00] teacher. And I taught Spanish in, um, high school setting, and I did this with my high school kids too. I gave them experiences with the language. We did activities with the language. We almost never in my classroom, daily just sat in our seat and memorized verbs and nouns.

Like we used the language, we incorporated it, we had authentic experiences with it, and all my kids came out even in Spanish, one, being able to speak Spanish really well. So it worked for them. It worked for my deaf kids, it worked for my hearing little girl. And it's gonna work for you guys if you let me teach you.

So that is why we're doing this, is we want to give kids an experience with language. We want them to learn language faster so that we can talk and communicate with our kids. So I'm gonna go over our five language activities, and I don't think it's gonna let me share my screen, but. Um, I will just go through the activities with you [00:08:00] and I'll just talk about them and at the end, um, like I said, I'm gonna put the document that I'm gonna talk about into the comments so that you can have the document that I'm looking off of as well.

Okay. And just wanna say, we're gonna go over five springtime activities that you guys parents. Can do or grandparents can do with their kids ages one to five. So these are really great for the younger kids to help them practice language skills while also having fun and enjoying the springtime weather that we're having, at least in the United States.

You can also do this through signing, okay? So if you are signing, I highly suggest using, um, for a SL, which is what we use. So that's what we're talking about today. American Sign Language. Use the, um, website hand speak, and

that is linked in this document. Um, I find that to be the most [00:09:00] reliable source to look up a SL signs.

And remember that is a SL Okay, activity in number one. Let's do with our kids a nature scavenger hunt. So for this, I want you to create a list of spring items that can be easily found wherever you live. So think about. Things that kids can find in your neighborhood, things can find, kids can find if you go to your local park.

Okay? Um, and e easy things, trees, flowers, lady boats, butterflies, something. You wanna make this easy for them because you want to incorporate the language, okay? So you want to be something that they can practically find, okay? And then as they discover each item, you're gonna check it off. And then you're gonna talk about each item and describe each item to your kids to build their vocabulary.

Okay? So what I want you to do to, there's a little preparation for this project, but not much. [00:10:00] Um, I want you to draw the items on a piece of paper or print out the pictures of the items that you want them to find and glue them onto a piece of paper, okay? So that they can have. A picture of what they're looking for.

So when they're like walking around your yard or walking around the neighborhood or walking around the park, they have this in their hand and they see the picture. It needs to be a picture. Okay. They can see the picture and then they can say, look, this is a tree. Let me find the tree. I drew this for you.

I am not an artist. Um, let me see if I can get this to come in.

I cannot.

Sorry guys. I'm messing. Almost, almost. Okay. Okay. You can see the idea. I'm sorry. Um, okay. Let me just take off the [00:11:00] background effect for a minute. Y'all just gonna see my whole room. Okay, here we go. Now, this is what I'm talking about. Um, I'm not an artist, but you can do something just literally as simple as this, or you can print out the pictures.

Okay. So what I did is I drew the item right here. I drew a picture of it and I put little check boxes because kids love to check things off when you find them. And then I also wrote the word, now we're talking about doing this for young kids. So I'm not expecting young kids to be able to read. But being able to start

recognizing different letters is helpful to kids and helps with that pre-reading strategy.

Um, so if you pair, like I said right here, the tree, I drew a picture of the tree and then I wrote tree. They, they don't know what that says because we're talking about little kids. So they probably will not be able to read yet, but [00:12:00] they can start to identify that these letters put together mean this picture.

And talk about this picture. Okay. And those are pre-reading skills that are important. So always put the word, even if they can't read it, they can start recognizing, um, alphabet letters and recognizing the letters put together, okay? And a little check box and you can print them out. So if they're going through and they're looking.

Um, they can check it off and they know what to look at. And you can even be more specific if you want to, if you like, wanna color this green and say, find a tree with green leaves and be more specific about the color. Or find a butterfly with yellow wings and like, color this in yellow so they know what to find.

Um, you can get really specific even about what types of things you want them to find, which builds their vocabulary even more. Um. And then what I want you to practice with this. [00:13:00] So after you do that, you're gonna walk around and then you have a lot of different things you can practice. But as they find each item, I want you to talk about that item.

I want you to talk about what that item is. So the noun, I want you to talk about what that item does. So the verb, and I want you to describe the item with adjectives. So for example, if they find a ladybug, say, oh, that's a ladybug. The ladybug crawls That ladybug is small. Okay, so we said what it is, the noun.

We said what it does, the verb crawls, and we said the adjective. It's small and you can continue as long as that your kids keep their interest on this. You can continue to, um, like talk about it and describe it more and ask your kids questions to paint on. Um. Yeah, like what level of speech and communication they're at, and you do that for each item that they find.

And I would [00:14:00] suggest putting like four or five items to start with for kids, right? You can always add more, but I would do four or five items on that to start with. All right, so number two, story time picnic. This will be fun. So I want you to go outside, take a blanket, take chairs, whatever, and read a few books together.

And what I want you to do. While you're reading, and really, this is just reading a book, but it's just taking it, um, in a different setting, right? So it might be more fun, um, like we read to our kids at night before bed, but sometimes it's more fun. They like to take their books into, um, their like playhouse outside.

And so, you know, when it's nice and the weather is warm or even in light, the fall, we'll. Tape the book outside to the playhouse and it's the same. We're reading the book, we're doing the same activity either place, but it's just fun for them because it's just reading the book in a different setting. [00:15:00] Okay, so read the book outside together.

Okay? Make sure you're close to them. There's not a lot of noise. Um, and then while you're reading the book, I want you to ask questions about the story. And I want you to encourage your child to express what. They think about the book, what they feel about the book, and ask them questions. Now, I want you to emphasize words that you're practicing with them already.

I want you to emphasize big. I want you to emphasize a little, I want you to emphasize color, words, verbs while you're reading. And I also want you to talk about the pictures. And this is a great strategy for kids who won't sit through a book. Um, I have one kid like that. My middle child won't often sit through me reading, so I will, um, describe the pictures to him and that's what I want you to do.

Even if your low one will sit through the reading. I still want you to describe the pictures because it's just a language, language, language. We just wanna bathe them in language [00:16:00] and experience language. So I want you to, to describe who the characters are. I want you to talk about what the characters are doing.

I want you to talk about where the characters are. I want you to talk about why are the characters doing what they're doing? Why? And I want you to talk about how they're doing, what they're doing, how are they driving, how are they digging, how are they shoveling? But I want you to describe like the colors and the actions of the characters as well.

Um, so I brought a book to give you an example. This is one of my favorite, favorite books. I've read it with all three of my kids called Swing. Um, it is a poem by Robert Lewis Stevenson, and it's also illustrated. It's a really sweet book. Short good for Kids with short attention span. And there's a lot to talk about in this book.

So for example, I want you to do, [00:17:00] if I were reading this to my kiddos, I would read. How, how do you like to go up in a swing? Look, whoop, look, he's going up, up, up. He's going up in the swing. There's grass look, there's flowers. He's outside. Yeah, he's on the swing and he's going up, up, up. And I want you to do that for every page up in the air, so blue and see, and see how I'm talking.

I'm almost kind of singing it or emphasizing certain words like I'm emphasizing blue because that's a color word and kids need to know like color words. That's one of the first like basic things that they learn right [00:18:00] up in the air. So blue. Oh, I do think at the pleasantest thing ever a child can do.

I've memorized this whole book and then talk about what the kids are doing. Um, get this book. It's so fun. It's a really sweet book, so that's why I want you to story time picnic. It will be a hit, I promise. All right, number three, gardening together. This would be fun. I recently did this. I am not a gardener and I love everybody who is a gardener really and truly I do, but I do have some plants.

I'm getting more interested in it. I'm just really busy with, with my kids and our dog. And I just like don't always have the capacity to remember to like water and take care of pla of flowers, which is like another living thing. Um, but some of you out there I know really love the garden and had beautiful gardens, and I love that about you.

And, um, I do have some flowers that [00:19:00] I put in, you know, some pots at our front door to make our front door look nice. And I was letting my, um, 6-year-old who likes to be a helper and he's the one who signs as well. Um, I was letting him help me plant the flowers, so let your kids help plant the flowers or even pick out the flowers as well.

So I took my 9-year-old. My 9-year-old helped me pick out the flowers, and then my 6-year-old helped me. Plant them, um, in our pots. So I use two outta three of the kids, God, to help me do that. Um, it, it's going to get messy and dirty. It is, uh, you know, just sweep the dirt out afterwards. But it's a great time for you to use descriptive language.

To discuss what you're doing, discuss colors, you know, textures while you're digging in the dirt. And this is really gonna give your kids a great experience with language because what you can practice is you [00:20:00] can practice the words. I want you to practice nouns, ass and verbs. Tell them what it is, what you're doing, and describe it.

Oh, digging in the dirt. So fun for kids who doesn't love to get a little messy in the dirt. You know, so you can talk about the dirt, say the word dirt, and then you can describe the dirt. You can say, we put it in the pot. Put it in the pot. That's a phrase that all little kids, you know, put it in, can cover up with the dirt.

Okay. And we can talk about the dirt. The dirt is wet, it's soft, it's squishy, it is dirty. And you can also talk about the flowers. This is a flower. It has roots and a stem and leaves. Look at the leaves. The leaves are green. The flower is purple. And we're gonna talk about, look, we're gonna put it in the pot.

Put the flour in the pot. [00:21:00] Now look, it's so pretty, right? Nouns, verbs, and adjectives. You can describe. There's so much you can describe while gardening together. Number four, leaf etchings. Did you ever do this as a kid? Um, we did and it was fun. And I am not an artist. I'm never like, just loved art. I used to it, but I never just like loved it as a kid.

Um, but I like easy stuff and I'm still like that. As an adult, I like easy, simple, not messy. So this will be easy, easy, simple, and not messy. But basically what you do is you want to go outside and collect leaves, flowers, sticks. You can do rocks, anything that has a texture to it. Okay? And then what you do is you put it, um, let me use this.

So you put the item here and you put the paper. You need a piece of paper, a piece of paper over the item, [00:22:00] and then you take a crayon. I'm gonna use a pen, but you take a crayon and you etch, you kind of rub. On the paper over the item and you'll be able to kind of etch, um, with the crayon, kind of the texture of what is under the paper, if that makes sense.

It'll come through on the paper and then you can color it or whatever. So you'll need to collect these things. You'll need a piece of paper and crayons. I think crayons work best with this activity. Okay. And so while you guys are crafting and etching. You can talk about a lot of things, right? You can talk about the flower leaf sticks, rocks.

Okay? You can talk about the crayons. You can talk about the colors. Okay? You can talk about you're rubbing it. That's a verb to rub and say to sit, we're sitting down. We're gonna rub it slow, slow. Okay, we're going to [00:23:00] draw, we're gonna color, these are all verbs, action words that you're gonna be doing and that you can talk about.

We're also going to describe the things, okay? Some things are smooth, some things are rough, some things may be beautiful. So the picture may be beautiful.



It may be pretty okay. I want you to practice those nouns, verbs, and adjectives in this activity. And last. One is simply playing on the playground is great time to play on the playground with your kids, and I want you to talk to your kids while you're playing on the playground together.

This is a perfect time and especially to do verbs. So every time my kids play on the playground, I practice so many verbs. Okay, action words, because they are doing a lot of action on the playground. Okay, so you can practice nouns like slide, swing, dirt, sand, if they're playing in the sandbox, shovel, whatever they're playing with.

You can also practice so [00:24:00] many verbs, like run, go. One of our favorite two ways to practice go and counting actually is on a slide and on the swing. Can't tell you when my kids were little, how many times we practiced one, two. Three go going down the slide. Right. And it's so fun. They love it. Or on the swing, I would hold them up.

I would say 1, 2, 3, go and like let the swing go. And I was giving them an experience with language too. Okay. You're counting and they're getting ready, their suspense and then go and you're letting them go. So they're also experiencing the action of go and it's so fun. Um, you could do run, walk. If there's like a field or something, you can say, er, run, stop, walk, walk, walk, stop.

Bummer. Run. Almost kind of like freeze or like stoplight, right? [00:25:00] Um, that's a fun game to play. You can talk about to climb, to swing, to slide. Put it in. If you're like in the sandbox, put the sand in the bucket, put it in, take it out. Okay? And especially little kids. For like toddlers. They love a good, put it in, take it out.

It's, that is a really good, um, uh, developmental skill for kids, like one to two. Everything is put it in, take it out, put it in, take it out, and you can practice that a lot. Then also practice things like fast, slow up, going up, up, up. So, and on the slide you can say, you're going down, we're going up, up, up, down.

Or something like that and use your voice in it too. And that'll be fun. And that is the easiest thing. Uh, you're already going to the playground. Just incorporate all that language into there. And those are your five springtime [00:26:00] fun activities. So practice with your kids and I hope that you guys have so much fun this springtime practicing language with your kids.

And like I said, I'm gonna put this, um, into the. Comments, this document. So all these activities I just talked about with these suggestions of what to practice, um, during those activities is all gonna be in the comments of this live event. Um, so that you can grab that and that you can go practice. And, you know, once again, why does this matter?

Because in order for your kids to really learn language, you need to give them an experience with language and we need to. Be teaching them while they are playing because that's how kids learn is playing. I cannot tell you developmentally how incredibly, um, important play is to kids. It's how they learn.

It's how they learn about the world around them. It's how they learn about actions. It's [00:27:00] how they sort through thoughts in their brain all through play and. The fastest, most efficient way to teach your kids language is through play and playing all day together. You know, you want to bathe your kids in language.

You don't want to just practice what you're learning in speech therapy, okay? Practice the goals that your speech therapist told you, but you also need to be practicing way more than that. You need to be talking to your kids, talking them through things. All day long, giving them way more. And your speech therapist wants you to do this.

They, this is how they want you to teach your kids language too. So I'm not saying anything that your speech therapist would not absolutely support, um, you doing, they want you to practice those goals because that's what they're targeting. And yes, absolutely practice those goals, but you should be practicing more than that.

If you're just practicing the speech goals and you're not really intentionally practicing, um, language with your kids, they're not gonna learn as fast. [00:28:00] Us. Okay. And then all these things that you're coming into the group and talking to me about, about tantrums and behaviors, and they're not learning. We sit down and talk about how are you practicing the language?

Because it takes a commitment and it takes an intentionality to teach them. But if you do it and you can do it in a way that fits into your daily routine, um, so it doesn't take a lot of extra time out, but if you do it and you just commit to the ages. Zero to five to really hone in on those language skills.

I'm telling you, 'cause I have a 6-year-old and a 9-year-old now, I'm telling you that it makes a difference to do this now when they're younger and when they get to be older, they get to be in school, you're gonna be so glad that you focused on language early in the beginning because you're gonna be amazed at their language skills and communication skills as they get older.

And that's not something that you know now until your kids get to be older. If you're in the little [00:29:00] stages with your kids, then that's where you're at and you, and you just don't know the older stages yet. But I'm telling you, I'm at the older stages and what we did in the younger stages to practice language, um, was pivotal in the language that my kids can do now, including my hearing 3-year-old.

And so I want to invite you. To come into our Play Your Way to Language course. I am currently uploading new modules every day, and it teaches you just this. It teaches you how to bathe your kids in language, how to give your kids a language experience, how to fit it in your daily routine. 'cause we're all busy, right?

And it also gives you bonuses about how to kind of tame those tantrums. Talk about. You know, taming some of those behaviors. So they're probably coming from not being able to communicate as well and how to work through that, what to do. I give you different strategies for [00:30:00] that and what has worked for my own kids and other kids.

And this course teaches you exactly what I'm talking about today. How to bathe your kids in language, how to give them a language experience, how to tame those tantrums and behavior through language and visual communication. And it's something we all have to learn to communicate. And the oh and the course is something that you can use with signing too.

So you can use it with spoken speech and you can use it with signing as well. And you can use it in addition to your speech therapy. So it compliments your speech therapy. Okay. It basically teaches you. How to more effectively use what your speech therapist is teaching you, a speech therapy. How to more effectively do that at home when you're not in therapy because your kids spend like one hour a week at therapy, but they're with you the rest of the week and there's so much that you can and should be doing.

And honestly, when you have little kids, if you're new to this journey, you just don't know what you don't know. And I remember, you know, doing that too. [00:31:00] Um. And I had to learn. And now I want to teach you how to do that

too. So if you are interested in coming into our course, you get support. Um, the course is, you know, enrollment at any time.

You can go through the lessons at any time. You also get coaching support once a week from me to help you. Like if you have questions or if you want, you know, just like we did today, um, like. Activity suggestions and like how to practice certain words and like what activities go well to that. I'll give you all of that in the coaching sessions.

Okay. That we have once a week in the group and you get replays to that. Okay? And you'll also get a group of parents together who are working on the language goals with their kids and all doing the same thing. So you def you get one-on-one small group support and you can go through these at any time.

Um, and you get bonus recordings as well. So. If you guys [00:32:00] are interested in teaching your kids language, not only teaching your kids language and having them learn language faster, but giving them an experience with language, then, um, drop into the comments that you want to know more, and I will give you more information about how to get into that.

All right, and I'm gonna put this, um, document into the. Comments as well so that you can have this whole document and you can go this weekend just in time for the weekend. You can go and do some springtime activities and practice those language skills as well together. All right. I loved being with you guys today and I hope you have a great rest of your day and have a great weekend.

[00:33:00] Hey, I hope this episode today, bless you, big time. If so, would you take 30 seconds and leave a quick review for the show on Apple Podcasts? It lights me up to know that this podcast is helping you and leaving a review helps other parents to find this podcast too. If you have a friend who needs to hear this podcast episode today, be a pal and text it or share it with them now.

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Did you know that I have a free community of parents just like you, busy parents who want to parent their child with more confidence while still getting all of the things done in the house. Each day in our community, we share strategies to help our kids learn language faster. A no sweat approach to the IEP, and we lean on each other for SU support and encouragement in this up and down journey of hearing loss with your [00:34:00] kids.

If you haven't found your community yet, then welcome home. Come join us at [facebook.com/group/raising deaf kids](https://facebook.com/group/raising%20deaf%20kids).