

Speech and Language

Darcey school is committed to facilitating the development of young children. Children develop speech and language skills at different rates. Speech and language skills occur in a developmental manner and each child develops the use and understanding of language through modeling, imitation, language enrichment, repetition, and adult guidance.

Play-based speech and language intervention is a form of treatment delivered in a natural way through play. This approach supports the therapist and child to build a connection and allows for turn taking through a variety of opportunities to foster new and developmentally appropriate language skills. Direct speech and language sessions with a child are individually focused on achieving their objectives to assure growth and progress in this area. The areas of language development includes: **Expressive language: the output of language**, the ability to express needs and wants through verbal or non verbal communication. **Receptive language: the input of language**, the ability to understand and comprehend spoken language that you hear or read. **Articulation**: the ability to formulate clear and distinct sounds in speech for words, phrases, sentences and connected speech. **Social language**: the ability to which we communicate verbally and non verbally with the world around us. **Pragmatic language**: is the most abstract level of language. After children master phonological skills to be understandable, have enough vocabulary and syntax and morphology in order to construct sentences, children must use this combined knowledge to accomplish social goals.

Language Development starts with sounds, gestures, words and sentences.

- Engaging in language opportunities is the best way to support language development.
- Encourage conversations with your child by commenting on what they are doing.
- Extend your child language and learning by repeating what your child says and then add more or a new vocabulary word.

General tips for parents to foster language development:

Play

- Play the way your child is playing and imitate key words and phrases, make comments, delight in their play, and support their play exploration.
- Use fun words, gestures, sounds (beep, beep, while playing with cars, yummy/mmm and rubbing your stomach when pretending to eat play food)
- Describe play actions and events while engaged with your child

Follow your child's lead

- Get down to their level while playing so they know you are joining in and 'being with' in their play

- Repeat correctly their words and statements ('Oh I see you are moving the cars up and down the ramp')
- Observe what they are interested in and then engage in play by supporting play situations and actions to help develop problem solving and higher level thinking skills.

Pause

- Slowly sing nursery rhymes, favorite songs and then pause at key words to encourage your child to fill in a word or gesture
- Pause a familiar activity, such as pushing a swing, and wait for them to use a word or a gesture ('more') to communicate that they want more pushing.
- Give time for them to respond to questions, if they are having difficulties- provide verbal choices (Q: What did you do at school today? Did you do a puzzle or read a book?)

Expand

- When your child uses 1-2 words, expand and turn it into a short phrase or a sentence (If child says 'more cookie' you can model back 'Oh you want to eat another chocolate chip cookie')
- Be sure to model correct use of grammar when expanding their message, even if your child is using immature forms.
- Use a variety of words and concepts: action words, descriptive words, position concepts (in, off, behind, next to in front) quantity (all, none, full, empty, more, less)

Read to you child

- Read slowly and point at the pictures in the story
- Describe the pictures ('I see the kids are waiting for the bus in front of their house')
- Use predictions ('I wonder what is going to happen next')
- Use inferences ('I notice the boy is making a face when eating the peas'- inference: 'His face is telling us he does not like to eat peas')