

## Getting Your Child to Tune into Talking (Language Facilitation Techniques)

### Be Face-to-Face/Get Down to your Child's Level

- Your child learns new sounds and words when he can see your mouth move as you talk.
- Position yourself so that you can look directly into your child's eyes (e.g., bend your knees, get down on the floor, lie on your stomach, put your child on your knees so he is facing you, or sit on the floor and give your child a chair).

### Allow your child to Lead

- Your child is more likely to stay in a conversation when we let him start it because we are paying attention to what he is interested in talking about.
- **Observe:** Get down to your child's level so you can make eye contact easily and watch what he is doing.
- **Wait:** Resist the temptation to jump in and start a conversation, make a comment, or answer a question for your child. Wait until he starts communicating with you.
- **Listen:** Any attempt by your child to communicate should be accepted, whether it is a look, a smile, a sound, a word, or a gesture. Then you can keep the conversation going by describing, commenting, labeling, or asking appropriate questions (see handout: Asking Questions to Keep the Conversation Going – ask your SLP).

### Turn-taking

- Remember that a conversation is like playing a game of tennis. Each person involved is responsible for keeping
- the game going. When your child starts the conversation, it is up to you to take a turn to keep it going. The way you answer may stop a conversation or your child may need support to keep the conversation going (see Handout- Talking is like Playing Tennis – ask SLP).

### Examples of "turns":

- Copying: One of the best ways to connect with very young children who are just beginning to communicate is to copy their sounds, actions, facial expressions, babbling, nonsense words (e.g., "baba"), and real words (e.g., "mama", "dada")
- Labeling: Name the objects or actions your child shows an interest in (e.g., "Car.")
- Commenting: Comment on what your child is doing/saying (e.g., "That is the blue car." or "You're right, that is a doll.")
- Describing: Describe what your child is doing (e.g., "push", "up/down", "in/out", "splash, splash").
- Modeling: Provide the kind of word/sentence structure that your child is able to produce (e.g., in

general: age 1 = 1 word, age 2 = two word combinations, age 3 = 3 word combinations, etc.)

- Interpreting: Interpret actions, sounds, or words you don't understand as meaningful. Use a word that seems appropriate to you (e.g., child sees a butterfly and says, "ooh". Parent says, "butterfly!")

**Repetition:** When we let our child hear a word being used often, it helps him to learn that word (e.g., dressing – "Here is your sock. Sock on. Blue sock. The sock is on your foot.")

### **Reward your Child's Communication Attempts**

- Your child will want to keep using gestures, signs, pointing, reaching, babbling, and talking, if it results in a positive reaction from you!
- The best reward is for you to respond to your child's communication by answering your child (e.g., "Oh, you would like your bottle?") or interpreting your child's communication by saying what he/she could have said (e.g., Your child reaches for the cookies and you model the word 'cookies'). Then follow-up by giving the bottle or cookie to your child as this reinforces your child's communication!

**Reference:** Handout-"Language Facilitation Techniques" – no source; Handout: "Help Your Child Communicate More Often by Allowing Your Child to Lead – Peel Preschool Speech and Language Program; Handout – "Parents Guidelines to Facilitate Language Learning at Home" – no source.