

Recommended Pre-K Communication-building activities for Week 4

Here are three sets of communication-building recommendations for children, based on what they are currently doing to express themselves.

These recommendations are for parents of **children who communicate using a combination of sounds, gestures (e.g. pointing, shaking head for “no”, waving “bye”) and eye gaze** (looking at you and then at what he is “talking” about). These children are sending clear messages, just not with words.

Sing simple songs with your child, especially ones with actions, like “Row Row Row your Boat”, and build in opportunities for him to participate. This is a fun way for him to learn to take his turn in an interaction, as well as to learn new words.

Sing Songs with your child:

- Sing a new song the same way a few times so your child learns the song and its “high point”. High points are the most interesting parts of a song. In “Row, Row, Row your Boat”, the high points are the rocking back and forth while you and your child sit on the floor, holding outstretched hands, and saying the last word after a long pause – i.e., “dream”.
- Once your child is familiar with the song, pause before a high point and **wait** for him to respond.

For example, when singing “Row Row Row your Boat”, sing the song through once or twice and then, still holding his hands, **WAIT** for him to ask you to sing it again (he will probably make a sound or rock back and forth to ask you to do it again).

Or, you can start to sing the song while rocking back and forth, pausing mid-song so he can ask you to continue.

Or, you can slow down and pause before the last word (“dream”), so he can make a sound - any sound - to end the song.

- To take his turn during songs, your child may wriggle, make a sound, look at you, point to something or perform an action. Accept **anything** as his turn and then continue immediately. The most important thing is that he takes a turn and has fun while doing it.

The tips below are for parents of **children who have started to use single words or who have started to put two words together** (e.g. “dog” or “Mommy go”)

Use many different *kinds* of words when talking with your child

Make a point of highlighting a variety of word types when talking to your child, not just the names of things. It is important for your child to learn a **variety of word types** in order to talk in short sentences. Therefore, emphasize **action words** (sleep, eat, run, push, squeeze, break), **descriptive words** (soft,

hot, big, sticky, funny, tired), **location words** (up, down, in, on, under), **words about belonging** (my, your, his, Mommy's), and **feeling words** (sad, sick, happy, angry), as well nouns or names of things (dog, book, bed, cup). Repeat these words often and make them stand out when you use them by exaggerating your intonation and slowing down a bit. For example, "Mommy is very... **TIRED** (yawn). I must go to bed because I need to have a good **sleep**. Then I won't be so **tired**."

The tips below are for parents of **children who talk in sentences consisting of a few or many words**. .

Expand your child's vocabulary by introducing a new word to a daily routine.

New words are learned during everyday activities. For example, if you want to help your child learn the word "lukewarm", you can say, "The bath water is lukewarm – it's not too hot, just a little warm." Repeat the word every time you perform that routine. Then plan how to use the word in other situations. For example, you could use lukewarm in relation to tea or coffee or even soup! Help your child understand more about the word when you use it. For example, "I like my tea to be very hot. Lukewarm tea isn't hot enough and it doesn't taste good."

Adapted from <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Parent-Tips/Parent-Tips---Sentences.aspx>