

Give a reason to communicate... then **wait**.

Waiting is important because it:

- Gives the child the opportunity to take the lead.
- Reminds her that we won't always talk for her. It gives her space to use her own words!
- Helps slow down the interaction and could take some pressure off of her to speak.

Children also respond really well to **foils**.

When we do this, we do something wrong, or pretend to not know how to do something, or where something is located, etc. The idea is to give the child the opportunity to communicate about whatever the foil is.

And when using foils, remember to **wait** for the child to communicate that something is off!

Ideas could include:

- A container of snacks or other desired items, that, once open, you discover it is empty and there are "no more".
- A toy with an important piece missing.
- Something that doesn't fit, either it's "too big" or "too small".
- Give her a snack, such as yogurt, but 'forget' the spoon.
- Save empty or dried up glue sticks (or a similar material). Let her discover that it doesn't work and communicate this to you.

The main idea is not to problem-solve everything for her in advance, or anticipate her needs too much. The more reasons she has to communicate things to us, the better! That being said, foils will only work for routines or items that she is very familiar with. If the routine is new to her, she probably won't know that anything is wrong.

Offering choices

Choices are a wonderful way to encourage language development, as they help us

- Model the language the child needs to use
- Obligate the child to respond verbally. If we just ask *yes/no* questions, it's perfectly appropriate for her to shrug or nod in response. When you give her a choice, it's as if you really don't know what she wants, and you need her to tell you.

Here are some examples:

- *Banana or apple?*
- *Do you want blue or red?*
- *Do you want to go to the park or play with toys at home?*
- *Should we make the castle bigger or pour water on top?* (during sand play)
- *Did you have fun at school? Did you sing songs or play outside?*
- *Oh, you played outside! On the slide or in the sandbox?*

Thinking about all of this while you are also going about your daily routines can feel like a lot of work! You may not always be able to do this, and that's ok! The benefits of adding this language into your conversations even for a few minutes here and there during the day can really add up over time!



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