

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

Waiting is important because it:

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

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 him a snack, such as yogurt, but 'forget' the spoon.
- Save empty or dried up glue sticks (or a similar material). Let him discover that it doesn't work and communicate this to you.

The main idea is not to problem-solve everything for him in advance, or anticipate his needs too often or too quickly. The more reasons he has to communicate things to us, the better!

That being said, foils will only work for routines or items that he is very familiar with. If the routine is new to him, he probably won't know that anything is wrong.

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



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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 him to shrug or nod in response. When you give him a choice, it's as if you really don't know what he wants, and you need him 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? (e.g. during sand play)
- Did you have fun at school? Yes! Did you sing songs or play outside?
- Oh, you played outside! On the slide or in the sandbox?

**** Keep the choices you offer at the language level of the child.**

If your child is just learning to use single words, use simpler verbal choices.

Likewise, we can model phrases as the verbal choices for children learning to use combinations of words.

And remember, your child might not respond immediately, so be sure to wait as long as you need to for a response. 😊

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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