

Ways to develop language

A very helpful rhyme from the [Hanan Centre](#) is “**Say less, stress. Go slow, show.**” Which means...

Say less	Keep what you say very simple. Use short sentences, or even phrases. Speak clearly. Children are more likely to imitate language that is close to their current level
Stress	Emphasize and exaggerate the key words you’d like the child to focus on
Go slow	Speak slowly, yet naturally. Pause between words and phrases.
Show	Use gestures, signs or pictures to help make the spoken language visible. You can also use objects in the environment. When reading a book, point to pictures or even printed letters/words as appropriate.

Offering choices

When we say the choice out loud, it

- Models the words children need
- Obligates children to respond *using words*. If we just ask *yes/no* questions, it’s perfectly appropriate to shrug or nod in response.

Since we want to increase the length of a child’s utterances beyond 1 word, try modeling phrases as you give choices. This typically means combining an adjective with a noun, or a verb with a noun.

Make sure you give a slight emphasis to the choices, to the words that he could try and respond with.

Here are some examples:

- Do you want to **play with bikes** or **play in the sand**?
- Should we make the **castle bigger** or pour **water on top**?

The benefits of adding this language into your conversations with children even for a few minutes here and there during the day can really add up over time!