

THE 5 R'S OF EARLY SPEECH AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Shannon Salverda, M.S., CCC-SLP

Chatterbox Learning



Know that even if you don't receive the response you were "hoping for", your child is learning from each interaction and benefitting from the focused attention you are bestowing.



Respect: Yourself and your child!

You know your child better than anyone else on the planet! Respect your intuition as a parent. Those "gut feelings" you have about your child and the needs of your child will lead you in a positive direction as you endeavor to teach your child new skills. Respect that your child is an intelligent, communicative being and that he/she will use any accessible tools (body language, facial expression, sound) to guide you.

Respond: To every effort toward communication!

Your child is communicating with you! Your role is to acknowledge that communication (in whatever form) and respond. Imagine how it feels to you when the person with whom you are speaking does not respond. Ensure that your child knows her communication is received. Acknowledge and reciprocate. Communication is non-verbal as well as verbal, so acknowledging facial expression and body language will help lay the foundation for reciprocal communication.

Repeat: Every facial expression, body motion, mouth posture possible!

These early nonverbal expressions are your child's attempts to explore reciprocal communication. Do what they do! Do whatever they do! If he bangs twice, so should you. If she sticks out her tongue, so should you. Repeating acknowledges the communication and models it back.

Routine: Allows us all to participate more freely!

Routines allow us to participate within a known and safe framework. We are more willing to participate because we know what comes next! Establish language routines (language scripts) in your child's favorite play activities, during meals, during bath, anytime! Use the same language scripts during the same activities each time and soon your child will be able to participate with confidence. Again, routines can be scaffolded (made increasingly more complex) to match your child's developmental level.

Relax!

You have embarked on a life-long journey with your child. Relax and enjoy! Focus on your strengths and passions and those of your child as you enjoy time together. Speech and language learning is a steady climb. Know that even if you don't receive the response you were "hoping for", your child is learning from each interaction and benefitting from the focused attention you are bestowing. You are setting the stage for positive learning together and years of new and wonderful explorations.