Especially for parents of preschoolers!

Talking Time

Talking and Listening

Preschoolers ages 3-5 are interested and curious about the world around them. Talking with your child about things that interest her helps her develop language and literacy skills.

What is the practice?

Talking with your preschooler can be a fun way to help her develop language skills and learn new words. Talk with your preschooler, ask her questions, and encourage her to share her ideas. By talking to your child and involving her in conversation, you can help her develop new language skills.

What does the practice look like?

Follow your child's lead during conversations. Ask her questions about her favorite toy, superhero, or TV program. Use her questions as a starting point for conversation. Be sure to include ***wh-*** questions: ***Wh****ere?* ***Wh****en?* ***Wh****at?* ***Wh****y?* and ***Wh****o?* Preschoolers love to talk and will be happy to answer questions about things that interest them.

How do you do the practice?

Every day there are many chances to talk with your preschooler. Remember to keep it fun and keep it interesting to your child.

- Sharing a book with your preschooler is a great conversation starter. Ask questions about the pictures and the story. Before you get to the end of a story, ask your preschooler what she thinks will happen next. Encourage her to share her ideas.
- Mealtimes are a great time to talk about the day. Ask your child what she did at preschool. Or ask what her favorite part of the day was. Have her to tell you about it.
- Pretend play is a great conversation starter. When you and your child are playing, get into the "role." Role-playing is a great way to get your preschooler actively involved in conversation.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your preschooler talking more?
- Do you hear your preschooler using new words in conversation?
- Does your preschooler enjoy imaginary play?

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Take a look at more talk with preschoolers

That Is the Question

Four-year-old Cassidy is very talkative. She is always asking her mom questions and is interested in everything. One night while Cassidy is helping her mom cook dinner, she asks, "Are we having cucumbers for dinner?" "No, Cassidy, we're not. Did you want to have a cucumber in your salad?" her mom asks. "No, Mommy, but you're cooking cucumbers." "Oh! That's zucchini. But it does look like a skinny cucumber, doesn't it?" Cassidy's mom responds.

Table Talk

Five-year-old Gabe is having a snack at the kitchen table with his mom and dad. They've just finished washing the family car out in the driveway. "Hey, Daddy, did you like that motorcycle that went by? It was cool!" "That was a scooter; they're a little slower than a motorcycle, but it was cool, wasn't it?" his dad responds. "You mean like my scooter?" Gabe asks. "You do have a scooter, Gabe, but to make that go you push it with your foot. The scooter that passed us has a motor, so it's a little different. But there's one thing I can think of that's the same for both riders; can you guess?" Gabe thinks for a few seconds before he says, "We both wear helmets!" "That's right, good thinking!"

Interest-Based Activity Prompts Conversation

Javiera has autism. She doesn't talk very much, but she likes to draw and paint. Her mom has helped her set up all of her art supplies. Now she can draw and paint in the kitchen as mom prepares their lunch. Javiera clips paper on her easel and works with concentration. As she works, her mother asks, "What is that a picture of, Javiera? I like the colors you used." Javiera continues to paint. "Wow! That yellow looks pretty, Javi. It reminds me of the sun." Javiera smiles and nods. She continues to paint, and her mother says, "That is a great painting. We'll let it dry when you're done and then we can hang it up to look at. Would you like that?" Javiera nods again. "Where should we put it?" asks her mother. Javiera points to a spot on the refrigerator: "There," she says. "Great idea," says her mother. "We'll put it on the front of the refrigerator."

IDEAs that Work

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