

Tips for Parents on Learning at Home

by Margaret Schrader, M.S., C.C.C.

Introduction

Being a parent is a very special role. Parents are responsible for teaching their children about life and how to live it fully. This can be a very big job, especially if your child has communication difficulties. Parents often need information about how to best meet the needs of their child.

Your child's speech and language clinician can give you helpful information about your child's speech and language development. The clinician can also suggest specific activities to help your child learn at home. In addition, there are a few basic guidelines on teaching and learning which can help you and your child succeed:

Tips for Parents

1. Let your child feel loved.

Touching, hugs, kisses, gentle words, or an approving smile will help your child feel relaxed and confident about learning. Use a happy tone of voice to convey love and acceptance. When your child feels loved, the child is more likely to be open to learning.

2. Remember that your child is just a child.

It's important to keep your expectations appropriate to your child's abilities. Ask your speech clinician about your child's language abilities. That way, you won't expect too much—or too little—from your child.

3. Give your child approval.

Appreciate any success in learning your child accomplishes. Compliments will encourage your child to continue to learn. Criticism may discourage your child. Accept that your child can make mistakes. Each child is unique. Let your child know that you accept your child's strengths and weaknesses.

4. Help your child to feel important.

Take time to do things with your child. Driving in the car, going to the store, and doing family activities are all opportunities for learning. Your child will appreciate your time and attention.

5. Remember that learning can be fun.

Have a good time with your child. Play together. Do things that delight both of you. If you do not

enjoy what you are doing, neither will your child. Follow your child's lead in finding things that are fun to do.

6. Talk to your child.

Even if your child does not seem to understand at first, talk often about what you are doing together. Give your child time to respond.

7. Really listen to your child.

Get down to your child's eye level, and look at your child as you are listening. Respond to what your child says. This shows your child that you are sincerely interested in the child's thoughts and feelings. Make sure your child has enough opportunities to be listened to.

8. Share your ideas and experiences with your child's speech clinician, doctor, or teacher.

Share information and ask questions about your child's learning needs. Let them know about situations which may affect your child's learning, such as illnesses or problems at home.

9. Take an interest in your child's schoolwork or therapy.

Help your child learn to be enthusiastic about learning. Talk about school and therapy in a positive way.

Summary

You are your child's first, and most important, teacher. You set an example for your child of how to listen and talk with others. You can make a big difference in how well your child develops communication skills. It is important to help your child learn and practice communication skills at home. As your child uses these new skills in everyday activities, you can feel proud of your child's success.

Refer to:

- 4.0 Articles on Learning to Talk and Understand
- 5.0 Articles on Home Activities for Speech and Language Development