



Communication Strategies

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Receptive language is the input of language. It is when a child understands what they are hearing, reading or visually seeing.

Strategies for building receptive language skills for a child who has hearing loss:

- **Positioning-** Get face to face, so your child can see gestures and facial expressions, this will enable them to learn/associate visual cues with language and meaning. Keep child nearby, so they don't miss any communication. Ideally within 3 feet of you, up to 9 feet is acceptable.
- **Reduce Background Noise-** Shut off TV/noise making devices, if possible; or move to an area that will be quiet. Paying attention to background noise will allow you to make other adjustments to improve communication (such as positioning or acoustic highlighting). Some times when hearing may be more difficult could be when the car windows are down, in restaurants, during sporting events, in bathrooms (hand dryers), etc.
- **Wait Time-** Give a longer pause while waiting for your child to respond. Hold a facial expression longer giving the child extra time to process the information. Sometimes the wait time may feel unnaturally long at first.
- **Bombardment-** Intensified, repeated, simplified communication to teach the meaning of a specific word. Especially useful in play, communicate the new word, a familiar word, then new word again. Example: When stacking blocks, communicate "up, block, up," repeat "up" every time you add another block. Repeat for several minutes so the child has the opportunity to learn the meaning of the new word.
- **Facial Expressions/Body Language-** Making eye contact helps people focus on conversation/read facial expressions. Facial expressions/body language help convey feeling/comprehension.
- **Parallel Talk/Communication-** Use simplified language to narrate what your child is doing. Describing what they are touching, seeing, feeling, smelling, and hearing increases exposure to language.
- **Sound Isolation-** Teach the child to say a sound of a word on its own, before teaching the whole word. Babies/toddlers do this when learning to speak. They typically will learn the vowel sound first, then the first sound of the word, then the last. Example: When learning the word "cat" they will say "aaa" first, then "caaa," finally they advance to the whole word "cat."
- **Acoustic Highlighting-** Added emphasis on an identified target (a sound or word that your child has missed or said incorrectly). A target can be important sounds, words, parts of phrases, or grammatical. Example: say "Cat" with emphasis on the T.