

SUGGESTIONS FOR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH MIDDLE EAR PROBLEMS

THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING

Talking to your child is necessary for his/her language development. Since children usually imitate what they hear, how much you talk to our child, what you say, and how you say it will affect how much and how well your child talks.

LOOK

Look directly at your child's face and wait until you have his/her attention before you begin talking.

CONTROL DISTANCE

Be sure that you are close to your child when you talk (no farther than 5 feet). The younger the child, the more important it is to be close.

LOUDNESS

Talk slightly louder than you normally do. Turn off the radio, TV, dishwasher, etc to move background noise.

BE A GOOD SPEECH MODEL

Describe to your child daily activities as they occur.

Expand what your child says. For example, if your child points and says "car," you may say "Oh, you want the car."

Add new information. You might add, "That car is little."

Build vocabulary. Make teaching new words and concepts a natural part of every day's activities.

Use new words while shopping, taking a walk, washing dishes, etc.

Repeat your child's words using adult pronunciation.

PLAY AND TALK

Set aside some times throughout the day for "play time" for just you and our child. Play can be looking at books, exploring toys, singing songs, coloring, etc. Talk to your child during these activities, keeping the conversation at his/her level.

READ

Begin reading to your child at a young age (under 12 months). Ask a librarian for books that are right for your child's age. Reading can be a calming-down activity that promotes closeness between you and your child. Reading provides another opportunity to teach and review words and ideas. Some children enjoy looking at pictures in magazines and catalogs.

DON'T WAIT

Your child should have the following skills by the ages listed below:

18 months: 3 word vocabulary

2 years: 25-30 word vocabulary and several 2-word sentences

2 ½ years: At least a 50 word vocabulary and 2-word sentences consistently

IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT HAVE THESE SKILLS, TELL YOUR DOCTOR. A referral to an audiologist and speech pathologist may be indicated. Hearing and language testing may lead to a better understanding of your child's language development.