

Talking Matters

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Helping your child to reach their potential



Goal: To develop understanding and imitating by reducing words used.

A constant banter of adult talk is confusing for the young child who is still learning about language. If your child is going to be able to understand the language that is being spoken around him, it has to be at a level he can cope with, and respond to.

- If your child is only capable of following single words, you should reduce your language to this level when trying to teach them new words. If he is capable of understanding 2-3 words joined together, parents should speak in sentences of 2-3 words length.
- Your child shouldn't be flooded with long, fast, complicated sentences as he may feel confused. If he has to listen to adults quick, complicated speech, he may feel it is too hard and not try to copy because he is bound to fail. If you talk at his level of understanding, he can understand what is being said to him, and is a lot more likely to try and copy it.
- Reducing language means reducing the number of words in each sentence, but it also means talking more slowly. Children can't process (think about) words and sentences as quickly as adults.
- You may wonder just how much you have to reduce your level of language? To work this out, listen to the level of language your child is using, as his ability to understand your language is roughly the same. For example, if he is only using 2-3 words per sentence himself, he can only understand sentences of about the same length, not 6-7 word sentences. Make your sentences about the same length as the sentences he is using to build his understanding.

