



Ways to Imitate & Expand

Imitate sounds

Imitate the child's sounds. Sometimes, a child will respond to your imitation with another sound. You can imitate the sound a second time and a third time, promoting reciprocal, or "back-and-forth," interactions. In this way, children practice skills they will need for having conversations.

Child

Ahhhhh

Caregiver

Ahhhhh

Ah-boo!

Ah-boo!

Model back words

When a child comes close to saying words, imitate the child using the correct word.

Ba ba

Bottle. Bottle, please!

Imitate, then expand to add more

Expand on what a child says by imitating the general idea the child expressed, and then add more to that communication.

Car

That car is going fast!

Teach new names for objects

There are many words that mean the same thing: puppy, dog; kitty, cat; cup, glass. Teach children different names for objects.

My tummy.

Yes, that's your stomach.

Imitate & Expand

Imitate a child's vocalizations or words back to the child, and expand by adding new information or words.



Sometimes a child tries to say a word, but it's not quite right. Rather than repeating back exactly what the child says, say the correct form of the word. Try not to tell the child they said the word wrong. As they grow, they will be more able to say words correctly.

