

When moving from one activity to another, communicate what will happen next. It will ease the transition and teach sequencing words.

Sample Transition Phrases

"After putting our shoes on, we'll go outside."

"In two minutes, we'll clean up."

"First, we'll wash our hands, then we'll eat."

"One more time and then we will go home."

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Planning a variety of activities keeps children engaged and creates opportunities to learn and use new words.

Sample Activities



Play



Music



Read



Outdoor Play

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It's hard for young children to wait between activities. Have simple, language-rich activities on standby to ease the waiting and encourage engagement.

Sample Waiting Activities



Sing a familiar song



Play I-Spy



Play a guessing game



Read a book

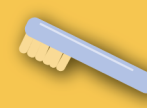
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Communicate predictable routines to your child by following a similar schedule from day to day, while still being flexible, as needed.

Sample Evening Schedule



Play



Brush



Read



Sleep

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Environment Tips

Environment Tips

Environment Tips

Environment Tips

Set up routines and areas within your home to encourage book activities.

Have books available for children to look at on their own throughout the day

Create a book area with comfortable seating to encourage children to spend time with books

Look at books together through the day; try to set a regular "book time" each day

Cut out pictures from magazines or use family pictures to make a book

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Set up areas within your home to promote opportunities for communication throughout the day

Have a few special toys set aside to bring out when you are busy with a phone call or task

Store some toys out of reach, but within view, so children have a reason to communicate their desire for the toys

To prevent boredom with toys, rotate them; this also helps ensure children play with a variety of toys

Post family pictures, magazine cutouts, or artwork on the fridge; talk about them when your child shows interest

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Set up areas within your home to promote opportunities for communication throughout the day

Have a regular place to keep toys



Allow some toys to be available to children throughout the day by placing them within reach

Keep toys throughout the house, in places such as the kitchen, bedroom, & bathroom

Place toys in bins or baskets, arranged with pieces together

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Allow babies to play with board books, bang them, & chew on them

If your child likes to skip pages, that is okay; follow your child's lead and enjoy your time together

Rather than expecting your child to listen quietly, talk about the story, pictures, characters, & whatever your child is interested in

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

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Environment Tips

Environment Tips

Environment Tips

Follow Child's Lead

Let your child lead by turning pages, talking about pictures, or telling the story

Read the story, but if your child begins talking about characters, pictures, or the story, join in on the conversation

While looking at books, comment on pictures, label characters, imitate child vocalizations, and expand on what your child says

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

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Follow Child's Lead

Describe what is going on in the story, the characters' actions, or what you see in the pictures.

"Thomas is helping his friends."

Label the colors and shapes you see in the pictures.

"I see an orange sun!"

Talk about how the characters are feeling.

"He is so happy. He found his puppy."

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

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Comment & Label

If your child points to a picture and vocalizes, say something more about the picture.

"Bike"

"Yes, he's riding his bike to school!"

"Da"

"Dog; that dog is playing."

When your child is "reading" to you, listen and watch to see what your child might be saying and expand on that.

"Moon"

"That IS the moon. It's a full moon."

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

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Imitate & Expand

Ask about the pictures in the book. If your child doesn't answer, provide a response and move on.

"What do you see? Where is the boy?"

Ask about the story and what your child thinks will happen next.

"What is happening?"

Ask about how and where to read.

"Who should read the book? Where should we sit to read?"

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

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Open Questions

Actively looking at and reading a book with your child is positive attention.

"You're holding a book; let's read it together!"

Give your child positive attention for wanting to look at books.

"I'm so happy you like reading books!"

Use a positive tone to talk about how your child is engaged with the book.

"You pointed to the truck! That's a big truck."

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

Positive Attention

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Give two books to choose from.

"Do you want the farm book or the zoo book?"

Offer a choice of where to read.

"Should we read on the couch or floor?"

Offer a choice of how you look at the book.

"Who should read first - you or me?"

Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.

Provide Choices

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When looking at picture books, point to a familiar picture and say...

"Look, it's a _____"

...and allow your child to fill in the blank.

"Doggie!"

Leave off the end of a sentence or phrase for the child to complete.

"The cow jumped over the _____"

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

Fill in the Blank

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When dressing, notice which clothing item your child is looking at and talk about it.

"You see the truck shirt. We can put it on first."

When your child starts to squirm, follow their lead by changing their diaper or taking them to the potty.

Imitate what your child says during tooth brushing.

"buh, buh"

"That's right, brush, brush, brush."

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

Follow Child's Lead

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Label colors, objects, or characters on clothing.

"Your shirt has a **dump truck** on it."

Talk about what is going to happen.

"You are going to **wear a blue shirt** to school today!"

Talk about what you are doing as you get ready.

"We're **washing our hands!** Now we're **brushing your hair.**"

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

Comment & Label

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When your child says a word during bath or dressing, you can add to it by describing what's happening.

"up"

"You put your **arms up!**"

"Wash"

"Yes, we are **washing your hands.**"

If your child makes a sound during bath, you can imitate it back or say the word you think your child was trying to say.

"ba"

"Bath."

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

Imitate & Expand

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Ask about body parts as you bathe or get dressed, pointing to knees, stomach, hands, etc.

"What is **this?**"

Ask your child what he or she would like to wear.

"Which **shirt** would you like to wear?"

While toileting, handwashing, grooming, or dressing, ask questions about what is happening.

"What do we do **next?**"

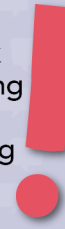
Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

Open Questions

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When you listen, follow the child's lead, and talk about what you are doing during dressing and grooming, you are giving positive attention and encouraging child talk.



Tell a child how nicely they are helping when diaper changing, dressing, and teeth brushing.

"You are **waiting so nicely** for me to finish changing you!"

Give positive attention when children do things on their own.

"You put your **coat on all by yourself!**"

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

Positive Attention

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Offer a choice of two clothing items, holding the options up.

"Do you want to wear your fish or car shirt today?"

Offer choice about how your child helps during bath.

"Who should wash your legs today - you or me?"

Offer a choice about how to get ready for the day.

"Should we put your shirt or shorts on first?"

Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.

Provide Choices

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When you notice your child watching as you clean house, comment on what you're doing.

"I'm folding your pjs. Next, I'll hang up your shirts."

Give the child a choice about what to clean, then help with that task.

When your child points at food you're preparing, provide a safe task and give positive attention.

"Thank you for helping me wash the fruit!"

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

Follow Child's Lead

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During bath, set up a routine over a few days or weeks in which you name body parts. When you feel your child knows the names, say...

"Here is your _____"

...and allow your child to name the body part.

"hand!"

! If your child doesn't fill in the blank, say the word for them.

Help pass time while your child is on the toilet by singing a familiar song. Leave off the last word so your child can finish it.

"Row, row, row your _____"

"boat!"

Try during diapering, too!

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

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While folding laundry, make a game of matching socks. Describe size and color as you're looking for matches.

"Here's a red sock. Where's another red sock?"

Use size and order words to talk about household items your child shows an interest in.

"The rag is small and the towel is big. We can fold the rag first."

Let your child help put away shoes. Talk about which shoes belong to different family members.

"Those shoes are Daddy's. The blue ones are yours."

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

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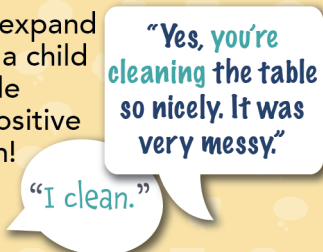
Fill in the Blank

Comment & Label

When expanding on household routines like preparing a snack or folding laundry, talk about the purpose of items.



You can expand on what a child says while giving positive attention!



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

Imitate & Expand

While putting laundry away, ask...



During transitions between routines, ask...



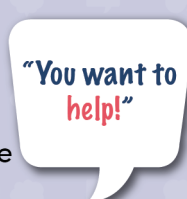
While setting the table, ask questions about what is needed and where things go.



Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

Open Questions

When your child points to the spoon while you're preparing dinner, encourage them by saying...



Give children positive attention for putting their cups in the sink or tub.



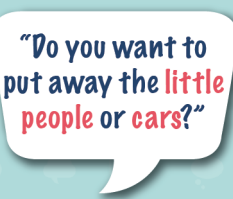
Use a positive tone to talk about how your child is helping you around the house.



Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

Positive Attention

During clean-up times, ask your child which toys he/she wants to put away.



Let your child choose how to help with chores.



Make a game of matching socks while doing laundry. While holding up a sock, say...



Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.

Provide Choices

While setting the table, describe what you are doing, then pause to see if your child will fill in the blank.

"One plate for Mommy, one plate for Daddy, one plate for..."

Pause to watch for a response

"Me!"

While folding laundry, label the items that are being folded. "Mommy's sock," "Daddy's shorts," "Sammy's" and leave off the last word for your child to fill in.

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

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Name the foods children are eating.

"Ethan is eating applesauce and crackers."

Talk about the colors, texture, or temperature of the foods you are eating together.

"The roll is soft and warm."

At a restaurant, talk about how the servers take orders, bring food out, or objects you see around you.

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

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Fill in the Blank

If an infant is watching you eat, describe your food.

"This apple is crunchy."

When toddlers are eating, talk about the foods they are enjoying.

"Those yummy carrots are orange."

When your child talks during dinner, follow along by asking questions and commenting.

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

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Comment & Label

If your child points to a food or drink, or says a sound for it, you can teach the word by saying it back. If they are saying the word, you can model how to request.

"Nana"
"Banana!"
"Juice"
"Juice, please!"

It's okay if your child doesn't repeat you! By modeling and giving her the juice, you are teaching her how requesting works.

When children share how they are helping clean up, you can expand and give positive attention.

"I clean"
"You are cleaning the table so nicely!"

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

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Follow Child's Lead



Imitate & Expand

Model meal-time conversation by asking open-ended questions about what you are eating.

"What are you eating?"

Ask about the foods you are preparing.

"Where do you think corn comes from?"

! When asking questions, accept and enjoy your child's responses, even if they don't answer the way you would.

While at a restaurant, ask questions as you look at the menu together.

"What do you see in this picture?"

"What do you think the chef is cooking?"

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

Open Questions

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Give a choice of cups, plates, or utensils.

"Would you like a blue cup or a red cup?"

Give a choice of foods. Show the options if you can.

"Would you like crackers or an apple?"

Offer a choice of tasks.

"Would you like to throw away the napkins or put the dishes in the sink?"

Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.

Provide Choices

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Watch to see how your child is eating or drinking and give positive attention for the things you see.

"You're holding your bottle all by yourself!"

Listen and respond with positive attention when your child talks or babbles during meals.

"You asked for more! Here's more milk."

Give your child positive attention for helping you in the kitchen. Be **specific** about what you liked.

"Thank you for putting your plate in the sink."

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

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While eating a snack together, say...

"Yummy, yummy, yummy in my tummy, tummy, tummy."

Feed a child 3 bites of food, then pause. If the child doesn't ask for more, say, "Can I have more..." and let the child fill in the blank. If the child doesn't respond, finish the phrase for the child.

After you know your child is familiar with this phrase, pause in place of the third "tummy" and wait to see if your child says tummy. If they do not, finish the phrase for them.

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

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Positive Attention

Fill in the Blank

Comment about your child's activities.

"You're climbing up the ladder and sliding down the slide."

Allow your child to guide your activities. If your child is drawing flowers with chalk, join in by helping draw trees or a sun. Talk about what you are both drawing.

Notice what your child sees while outside and ask open-ended questions about it.

"That's a big truck. What are they doing out there?"

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

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While playing outside, watch and listen so you can imitate and expand on what you hear your child say.

"Ba!"

"You're throwing the ball!"

"Whee!"

"Whee! It's fun to swing."

Watch your child play, even if they are playing independently. Expand on what your child points to or signs. If they point to a bird, you can say...

"Yes, that's a blue bird."

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

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Follow Child's Lead

Label and describe your child's actions.

"You're swinging so high!"

Watch to see what your child is looking at and comment on that.

"There's a squirrel. It's looking for nuts."

Label your child's toys. Talk about what they do or their purpose.

"Your bike has pedals so you can go fast."

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

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Imitate & Expand

Ask your child to tell you about what they are experiencing while playing outside.

"What do you see?"

"What is the dog doing?"

"Where are the yellow flowers?"

Ask the child to tell you how they want to play outside.

"How should we play with the ball?"

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

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Comment & Label

Open Questions

Give your child positive attention for doing things on their own.

"You went down the slide all by yourself!"

"You climbed up the ladder. You're so strong!"

! Playing with your child is giving them positive attention!

Watch to see if your child plays nicely with another child and give positive attention for it.

"I like how you are taking turns bouncing the ball with your brother!"

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

Positive Attention

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Use your outdoor time to practice filling in the blank. Pick a phrase like "1, 2, 3, go!" or "Ready, set, go," and use it for different activities.

"Ready, set..."

Pause to watch for a response

"Go!"

Fill in the Blank

Blow bubbles for your child. Hold the bubble wand to your mouth and say "ready-set..." As soon as your child vocalizes or gestures, blow the bubbles. If your child doesn't respond, say "go" and blow the bubbles.

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

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Offer a choice of activities.

"Do you want to swing or go down the slide?"

Offer choices of locations.

"Should we go to the park or pool?"

Provide Choices

Provide a choice of toys or materials, while showing the choices.

"Do you want the blue ball or red ball?"

Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.

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Give healthy choices between foods when grocery shopping.

When you enter the playground, watch to see where your child is looking and visit that area first.



Follow Child's Lead

! If your child is not saying words yet, hold the two food choices up apart from each other and watch for your child to reach for or look at one. Then label the choice.

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

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Talk about what you are shopping for at the grocery store or while doing other shopping.

"I see some **ripe bananas!**"

Label what you see or what is going to happen when you go to new places.

"The **doctor** is going to listen to your **heart.**"

Name the places you will visit as you go about your outings.

"First, we'll go to the **post office** and then we'll go to the **store.**"

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

Comment & Label

When going to familiar places, ask questions about them.

"**How** are we going to get to **Nana's house?**"

Ask questions about what your child sees while you are out.

"**What color** is that **car?**"

! If your child does not answer a question, simply answer the question yourself and continue your conversation.

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

Open Questions

Repeat what your child says when he or she names things seen in a store.

"**Shoe**"

"Those **shoes** look **fast!**"

"You found the **crackers.**"

"**Cracker**"

Expand on what your child talks about at the park.

"**Swing**"

"You're **swinging** back and forth."

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

Give positive attention when your child points to or attempts to label things they see while out and about.

"**You pointed** to the **mailbox!**"

Use positive descriptions when your child is attempting to communicate with others.

"**You're talking** together so **nicely** during our car ride."

Give positive attention to your child when they participate in an activity with you.

"**You helped me** pick out the soap and toothpaste!"

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

Imitate & Expand

Positive Attention

Provide a choice in how you do your errands.

"Should we check the mail or go to the store first?"

Offer a choice of carts in the grocery store.

"Would you like the shopping cart or the basket?"

Keep your child involved by offering simple choices while shopping.

"Do you want bananas or pears?"

Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.



Provide Choices

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While shopping for groceries, hold up a familiar item, such as milk, bananas, or cereal, and say...

...and allow your child to label the item.

"milk!"

"We're buying _____"

! If your child doesn't fill in the blank, say the word for them.

Practice fill in the blank while driving in the car with favorite songs or look and find games.

"Twinkle, twinkle, little _____"

"star!"

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

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Allow children to direct your activities. If a child is lining up blocks to make a road, join in. Talk about where that road might be going or who is driving. Try to avoid telling the child how to play.

When you label what your child is playing with, they can hear that you are interested.

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.



Follow Child's Lead

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While playing ball, label your child's activities.

"You rolled the ball fast!"

Build a block tower and talk about how you are working together.

"We stacked the blocks up high!"

While playing games, label whose turn it is.

"Now it's Max's turn."

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

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Fill in the Blank



Comment & Label

If a child points to a toy and vocalizes, say something more about the toy.

"Ball"

"That is a bouncy ball!"

"Dis"

"You want this doll."

Give the child one or two blocks at a time. If the child signs "more," imitate the sign while saying "more." Then add a block.



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

Imitate & Expand

TALK talk.ku.edu

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Notice what your child is playing with or interested in and ask questions.

"What are you playing with?"

Ask questions that encourage a more lengthy response.

"Where is your truck going?"

Ask questions that allow the child to lead during games.

"Who goes next? What happens now?"

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

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Make comments when children are playing together nicely.

"You're sharing the toys so nicely."

When you see a child playing well, encourage by describing the play.

"Sascha put the puzzle piece in its place!"

Use a positive tone to talk about how children are talking with each other.

"You are having a nice chat while you color."

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

Positive Attention

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Offer a choice of two activities the child is familiar with.

"Do you want to color or dance?"

Offer a choice of where to play.

"Do you want to play dolls on the couch or floor?"

Offer a choice of songs during music or play time.

"Do you want to listen to Baby Shark or Twinkle, Twinkle?"

Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.

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Open Questions

Provide Choices

While playing with blocks say...

"Blocks go up, up, up, and down, down, down."

...then after several repeats say...

"Blocks go up, up, up and..."

...and wait to see if the child will fill in the blank.

"down, down, down!"

Fill in the Blank

Comment & Label

While playing with a baby doll say, "Time for baby to go night, night." Sing the song that is sung to your child every night before bed. While singing this familiar song, leave off the last word to see if your child will fill in the blank.

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

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Make up a fun way to comment about tucking your child in.

"I'm tucking you in snug as a bug in a rug."

Label the items your child needs for sleeping.

"Blanket, bear, pillow... you are ready to sleep!"

Talk about what is happening next.

"After we read a book, it's time to turn the light off."

Describe, name, or talk about a child's actions, activities, toys, or materials.

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You can follow a baby's lead by watching for signs of tiredness, such as turning away from you. Let the baby know you can see they are tired and respond by helping the baby fall asleep.

Watch to see how your child feels about bedtime and comment about those feelings.

Notice what a child is interested in, and use that to provide opportunities for communication.

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Listen for bedtime words and repeat and add to them.

"Night"

"Good night, buddy!"

"Hug"

"Time for a good night hug."

If your child says, "no" about bedtime, show you understand and then explain it is time to sleep.

"No bed."

"You don't want to go to bed, but we have to sleep."

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

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Follow Child's Lead

Imitate & Expand

Ask about what happens next in the child's bedtime routine. It's okay if they don't know how to answer.

"We brushed teeth. **What happens next?**"

Ask questions about events leading up to nap.

"**What book should we read before nap?**"

Let your child lead by answering "where" questions related to sleep routines.

"**Where should we put your baby during bedtime?**"

Ask questions in a way that encourages children to respond in different ways, rather than simply "yes" or "no."

Open Questions

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If a child says, "night night," let them know you understand.

"**Thank you for letting me know you're tired.**"

When a child wakes up from a good nap, encourage them.

"**I'm glad you had a great nap today!**"

Use positive talk during bedtime routines to make the transition to sleep more pleasant.

"**You brushed your teeth and got ready for bed. You know just what to do!**"

Pay attention, respond, and make positive comments to children when they use vocalizations, words, and gestures.

Positive Attention

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Offer choices about how bedtime routines will happen.

"**Do you want to sing in the chair or in bed?**"

Provide a choice about how many books to read before bed.

"**Do you want to read 1 or 2 books before bed?**"

Give choices about who will complete parts of the bedtime routine.

"**Who is going to turn the light off, you or Mommy?**"

Provide two objects or activities from which a child can choose to encourage communication.

Provide Choices

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Make a routine of saying goodnight to different objects in the room. Point to an object and say...

"**Good night, _____**"

...and allow your child to name an object they can see.

"moon!"

Count your child's fingers and toes when tucking them into bed. Pause to give your child a chance to vocalize. It is okay if the child doesn't respond correctly.

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9..."

"10!"

Plan a delay in a predictable routine, song, or common phrase to encourage the child to communicate.

! If your child doesn't fill in the blank, say the word for them.

Fill in the Blank

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