

Communication & Language at Home

Handouts, Tips, and Ideas to Support Parents & Students with Distance Learning

Stay Connected!

Now is a great time to connect with family and friends who may also be confined to their own cities, houses, or apartments. Take some time to tackle these conversational and social skills while making phone calls, texting, or video chatting.

Basic Conversation

Can you check off one of each during a chat?

- Greet
- Answer a question
- Ask a question
- Make a comment ("Cool!" "That's good")
- Tell a story
- Change the topic
- Say goodbye

Script It

Preplanning and creating expectations can be powerful! Write or create visuals to help your child use frequently used phrases and questions.

- Hi
- How are you?
 - What are you doing?
 - I miss you
 - Talk to you later
 - I love you. Bye



Texting

- Quick language and social skills to tackle via text!
- Texting is technically written language! Can your child compose their thoughts in text?
- Interpret meaning without cues from tone of voice (sarcasm, figurative language)
- Use emojis to express emotion and ideas
- Decode common acronyms (LOL, IDK) or create your own for fun!

- These are also skills that can work on face-to-face in your own home:
- Interpret emotion and body language
 - Make (virtual) eye contact
 - Stay on topic!
 - Start talking about the conversation
 - Keep the conversation going

Get Some Fresh Air!

Social distancing doesn't mean you have to be stuck indoors! If the weather allows, have a yard or uncrowded outdoor space to take advantage of, get outside activities to support communication.

Core Vocabulary

- Work in these phrases and requests!
- Go out
 - Want play
 - You come
 - Do it
 - Want turn

There are lots of things to see and talk about outside!

- Play a game of I Spy! Describe on their color, shape, action
- Look up at the sky! Can you that look like something else?
- Have a chat and describe the outside between winter and summer: Temperature, smells, sights,



Language Moments

- Quick ways to make language part of play!
- Swings-ask for help/push
 - Bikes/Scooters-practicing following directions for STOP, GO, LEFT, RIGHT, etc.
 - Taking a walk-describe or comment on what you see
 - Chalk-request for colors or help drawing

Social Skills

- Social distancing doesn't mean social skills can't be targeted with family!
- Turn Taking: model appropriate turn taking for your children by engaging with them during games/activities outside.
 - Personal Space: always a great topic for discussion, but a quick walk through the neighborhood is a unique opportunity to demonstrate appropriate social distancing

Build a Fort!

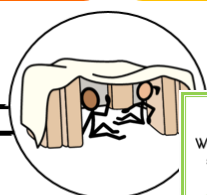
What day spent cooped up inside is complete without a fort? This is a simple activity you can do at home with items you already have on hand! Here are some ideas for stimulating language and communication as you build.

Core Vocabulary

- Work in these phrases and requests!
- Put up
 - Take down
 - Go in
 - Want more
 - Put here

Problem Solving

- Forts are no easy feat!
- Hand him/her only the blanket, see if they can find things to prop it up
 - Make a base that is too large for the blanket. Can he/she adjust?
 - Suggest building the fort in an odd location. Can your child recommend a better spot?



Pretend Play

- A blanket fort can be anything you want it to be!
- Work in gross motor by moving like animals that live in caves or dens.
 - Roleplay as monsters, ogres, or trolls. Are you kind or evil?
 - Work together to create a fairytale involving a castle. Take turns telling one line at a time!

- Although distancing in families have own social skills:
- If sharing your child's time.
 - Have your Practice friends!

Movie Night

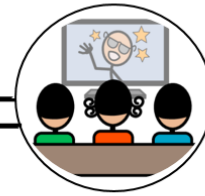
While we tend to view screen time as having potentially negative impacts on language and social interactions, there are plenty of ways we can engage our children while watching movies or television together.

Commenting & Describing

- Talk about what you see and feel!
- Play a game of I Spy. What do you see on the screen?
 - Comment on actions or events. "Wow that was so cool!" "I love this part!"
 - Describe how a scene makes you feel
 - Where does the movie take place? Can you describe what it might be like there?
 - What color are the costumes?

Receptive Language

- It's not all about conversation!
- Pause in between scenes and help your child summarize what happened.
 - Can your child predict what might happen in the next scene or at the end of the movie?
 - End your movie night with a quick game of Jeopardy. Who can answer the most questions about characters and events?



Social Skills

- Screen time doesn't have to be alone time!
- Put yourself in a character's shoes. How would you feel if you were in their situation?
 - Identify instances of appropriate vs inappropriate social interactions.
 - Have a discussion about your favorite parts and characters after the movie. Do you agree or disagree with one another?

Written Language

- Don't forget, writing is a way to express ourselves too!
- Write a review! Did you like it or not? Explain why.
 - Rewrite one of the scenes from the movie or create your own alternate ending.
 - Make a list of adjectives to describe the characters.
 - Type an email/text about the movie and send it to a loved one!

hello! HELLO
Miss Emily F

SPEECH WITH A SPECIAL ED TWIST

Cooking and Communication

Cooking and eating are one of the only constants in what has become a very hectic time. Fortunately, this is an activity you can do as a family and can be transformed into a wonderful opportunity for communication! Here are some tips for language and communication in the kitchen:

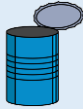
Spatial Concepts

Work on listening and following directions using basic spatial concepts with some of these tasks...

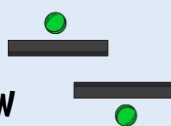
- Putting ingredients **IN** the bowl



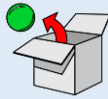
- **OPEN** containers



- Look for ingredients **ABOVE** or **BELOW**



- Take ingredients **OUT** of the fridge



- Set the table (**LEFT, MIDDLE, RIGHT**)



Making Requests

Cooking at eating are the perfect time to work on the essential skill of asking for wants & needs

- Ask for **MORE** for a second helping



- Provide options, which one do you **WANT**?

- Keep some things out of reach, ask for **HELP**



- Accept (**YES**) or reject (**NO**) food



- Say when you're **DONE** eating



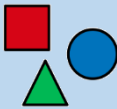
Model, Model, and Model Some More!

Don't make yourself feel like every task needs to be a test! Encouraging your child to communicating and/or practicing using a device will be beneficial but it can be cumbersome and chaotic if you're busy! You can provide low-stress support by modeling with your own words and actions. Narrate what you're doing and emphasize concepts or key words. If your hands are free and clean, highlight key words on your child's communication device. For example, if your child is having trouble with something you can say "let me help you with that" and press "help" on the device.

Describing

Talk about the look, taste, smell, and feel of what you're cooking!

- What **SHAPE** are the containers?



- What **COLOR** are the ingredients?

- Does it feel **STICKY? SOFT? WARM?**



- Does it taste **SWEET? SPICY? SOUR?**



- Do you **LIKE** it? Does it taste **GOOD? BAD?**



Cooking is of course a great way to target these functional skills...

Life Skills

- **Hygiene** (washing hands)



- **Safety** (using knives, ovens, etc.)



- **Chores** (washing/putting away dishes)



- **Independence** (feeding, opening, etc.)



- **Following routines/sequences** (recipe, cleaning up, etc.)

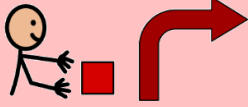


Game Night

Playing a game is a natural and low-stress environment for stimulating language, interaction, and communication. Here are a few ideas to get you rolling on your next family game night!

Core Vocabulary

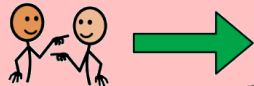
Want turn



I go



You go



Play this



Work in these phrases and requests!

Who turn?

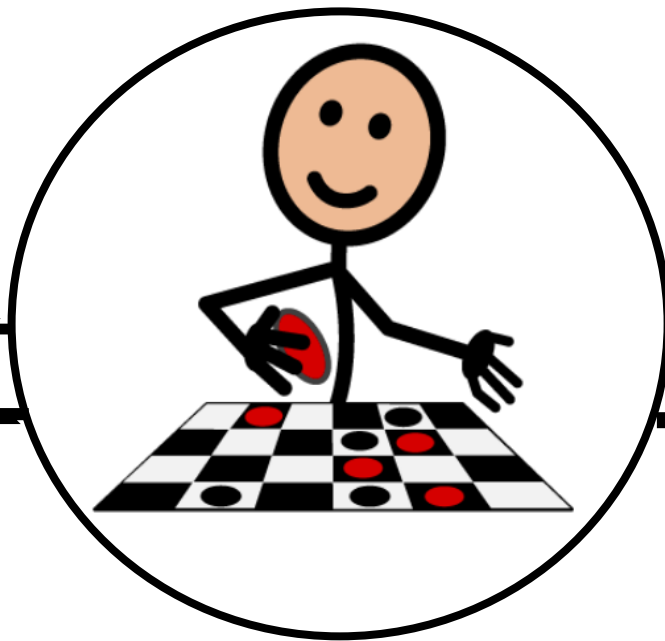


These simple games target basic language concepts!

Basic Concepts

• Uno-matching, colors, numbers

- Simon Says- body parts, following directions
- Go Fish- numbers, listening comprehension
- Guess Who- describing
- Twister- body parts, colors, following directions



Self-Regulation

Games can be challenging for some of our kids!

- Taking turns
- Dealing with loss, appropriately celebrating
- Expressing frustration
- Encouraging others
- Using self-talk ("It's just a game")

Life Skills

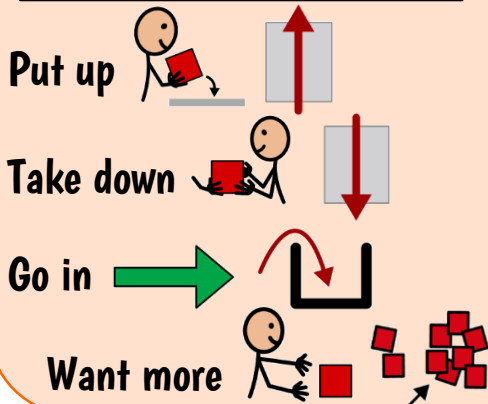
Spice up your routines by making them a game!

- Laundry Relay-assign each person a role (sorter, folder, hanger). How fast can you put the laundry away?
- Speed Skating- spray cleaner on the floor and put paper towels on your feet
- Kitchen Scavenger Hunt- locate all the ingredients/tools needed to make a recipe

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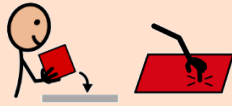
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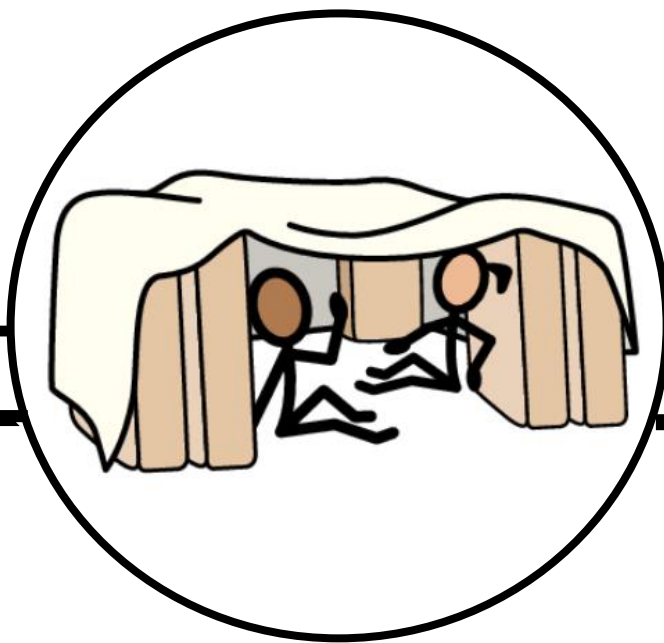
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Social Skills

Although we're distancing from friends, families have their very own social dynamics!

- Greet family as they come into the fort.
- If sharing the fort with siblings is hard for your child, practice taking turns by setting a timer.
- Have your child host a "party" in the fort. Practice inviting others to play or inviting friends to come over.

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- **Play a game of I Spy!** Describe things based on their color, shape, actions, or category.
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- **Have a chat and describe the differences outside between winter and spring.** Temperature, smells, sights, animals...



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Video Chat

- **Interpret emotions from facial expressions and body language**
- **Make (virtual) eye contact**
- **Stay on topic! Give a cue if you're going to start talking about something else.**
- **Keep the conversation going with questions and comments.**

Credits

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