

WAYS TO TEMPT YOUR CHILD TO COMMUNICATE

1. **Give smaller-than-usual portions.** When putting food on your child's plate or tray give only a small amount. The child may then look to you wondering why there isn't more, or they may look at you silently asking for more. This is a great opportunity to model the words or to label the wanted food. The more times you can do this in one sitting, the more exposure the child will have to that word.
2. **Create a situation in which the child will need your help.** Give a screw top jar to the child to open. After they attempt it without success, you can say, "Do you need help? Help, please." Another example is to place a favorite toy or wanted item out of the child's reach but within view. As the child looks at the object and then to you, you can say, "Do you see your cup? Do you want your cup? Say cup." Or ask them to point to the wanted item if this is the goal for this child. Other ideas include giving the child a wind-up toy or a bottle of bubbles and, after they are unable to use the toy independently, ask if they need help.
3. **Waiting with a routine.** If you are engaged in a game of rolling the car or ball back and forth between the two of you, you can model the phrase "Ready, Set, Go!" After using this phrase several times while playing, only model the first two words: "Ready, Set...." and wait to see if the child tries to fill in the word. You can also model the word "Go!" with a singsong quality.
4. **Another waiting technique:** take two associated objects like a shoe and your foot. Hold your foot above the shoe and look expectantly at the child. You can provide language like "Where does my foot go?" and after a pause point to the shoe and say "In the shoe!" The child may be encouraged to point at the shoe or to say a shortened version of the phrase by saying "In." Other items to use are toys in a box, books on a shelf, clothes in the washing machine, silverware in the drawer.
5. **Offer the child choices.** Hold up two objects like two different foods and wait for the child to point to the wanted item. This can also be done with toys, clothing, DVDs, etc. Once the child has made a choice by pointing, label it for them as one word or a small phrase - "Apple" or "Apple, please." If the child is not yet able to make a choice, remove one choice and ask if they would like the remaining item before giving it to them. Try offering the same two choices again later, and going through the same steps, moving the child towards making an independent choice between two items with either pointing or words.

These are just a few ways to offer the child the opportunity to communicate and engage. Remember to keep it fun!