

Helping Your Child Talk More (Ages 3–7)

10 Simple Language Strategies for Everyday Life

How to Use This Handout

You don't need to use all strategies at once. Start with **1–2 strategies daily** and build from there. Language grows through **repeated, natural interaction not perfection.**

Preschool Language Strategies (Ages 3–5)

1. Follow Your Child's Lead

What it means:

Watch what your child is interested in and join *their* play instead of directing it.

Example:

Child opens magnetic tiles and stacks them.

Instead of:

“Let's build a house!”

Try:

“You're stacking them... I'm going to do it like you... wow, it's getting tall!”

2. Self-Talk and Parallel Talk

What it means:

- Self-talk = talk about what *you* are doing
- Parallel talk = talk about what *your child* is doing

Example:

Self-talk:

“I’m opening the box...”

Parallel talk:

“You’re putting the pieces together...”

3. Expansion Strategy

What it means:

Repeat what your child says and add more words.

Example:

Child:

“Dog run”

Adult:

“Yes, the dog is running fast!”

4. Recasting (Without Correction)

What it means:

Repeat your child’s sentence in the correct form without saying they were wrong.



Week 9 Handout: 10
Strategies to help your
Preschooler/ School-age
children communicate
effectively

Synapse Kids
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Web: www.synapsekids.com

Example:

Child:

“I goed park”

Adult:

“You went to the park!”

5. Reduce Question Load

What it means:

Instead of asking many questions, describe what is happening.

Example:

Instead of:

“What is this?”

Try:

“That’s a big red ball. You’re rolling it fast!”

School-Age Language Strategies (Ages 5–7)

6. Dialogic Reading (Interactive Reading)

What it means:

Turn reading into a conversation, not just listening.

Example:

“Why do you think the character did that?”

“What might happen next?”

7. Narrative Scaffolding

What it means:

Help your child tell stories in order:
first → then → last

Example:

“Tell me what happened first... then what happened next ... last what happened?”

8. Semantic Elaboration (New Vocabulary in Context)

What it means:

Use richer words and explain them naturally.

Example:

“That was exhausting it means really tiring.” My workout was really exhausting! What was something that was really exhausting for you today?”

9. Sentence Expansion

What it means:

Turn short sentences into fuller ones.

Example:

Child:

“We play outside”

Adult:

“You played outside with your friends.”

10. Wait Time + Open-Ended Questions

What it means:

Ask a question... then pause and wait.

Example:

“What was your favorite part of today?”

(Wait 3–5 seconds)

Simple Daily Routine (How to Start)

You don't need extra time. Use what you already do:

- During play → follow your child's lead
- During routines → describe actions
- During conversation → expand what they say
- During reading → ask simple thinking questions
- During talking → pause and wait

Key Reminder for Parents

👉 Language grows through **interaction, not instruction**

Your child does not need more pressure.

They need:

- more modeling

- more shared attention
- more time to respond
- more meaningful conversation

You're Worried About Your Child's Speech

If your child:

- uses very few words
- struggles to form sentences
- avoids talking or shuts down
- cannot explain experiences

It may help to get a clearer understanding of their language profile.

Support Option

A short consultation with a SLP can help you:

- understand your child's communication level
- identify what strategies are working
- get personalized next steps
- move forward with clarity instead of guessing

Final Thought

You don't need to "teach" language all day.

You just need to **change how you respond in the moments you already have.**

Small shifts → repeated consistently → lead to meaningful change in communication.