



## Public Site

### Supporting Receptive Language Skills at Home - Building Literacy through Language

#### HELPING KIDS UNDERSTAND AND REMEMBER - LITERACY

1. Keep your sentences **simple** and give instructions in **short sentences** one at a time.
2. If the child gives you **no response** or an **incorrect** response to a question or statement, **repeat** exactly what you said. OR  
  
If you get no response or a strange response, change your wording or add more information. Determine what was confusing to the child and change your statement or question to ensure better understanding. Do not say too much or you will **overload** the child (e.g., Parent: "I was raised in Deep River.", Child looks shocked. He/she may have understood that you were raised in a deep river, Parent: "Deep River is the name of the town where I grew up.")
3. Make sure the child is **paying attention**. If he/she is not attending, call him/her by name, gently touch his/her arm, and remove any distractions. Get close to him/her and keep eye contact.
4. Ask the child to repeat what you said to find out if he/she understood your statement. If the child has difficulty providing a repetition, repeat or change what you said.
5. **Stress** important words and use **pauses** (e.g., Teacher: "If you want to colour this picture (pause) use crayons (pause) not markers.>").
6. When you use a **figure of speech**, **follow with a clear statement** of what you meant (e.g., Adult, "I know the number off the top of my head. I mean, I have the phone number memorized. Get a pencil and paper so I can give you the number.>").
7. Give the child **time to respond**. Teach the child to wait before responding to allow him/her to process what has been said instead of responding impulsively.
8. Provide the child with many **repeated experiences** (e.g., visits to the library, trips to the park). Talk about what you are doing, what you see, or how you feel. Children need many repeated opportunities to practice using their language. Each time the experience is repeated, the child can focus on new ideas.
9. Encourage the child to use **memory strategies** such as repeating the information in his/her head, paying attention to key words, picturing the information in his/her head, and using mnemonics (e.g., a rhyme to remember time changes: "As you go east, the time will increase; as you go west, the time will grow less.>").
10. **Offer interpretations** of what other speakers say that may be difficult for the child to understand.

H. Emrich, D. Paliani, K. Prescott, D. Waselenko, G. Warr-Leeper, Helping Kids Discover and Develop Language, 2000

