

Speech and Language for Young Children

General ideas for stimulating young children's speech and language, oral motor skills, articulation, and fluency

This chapter contains general information and ideas to help stimulate your young clients. These ideas may be used as a guide when engaging in the specific activities discussed in this book. You may be aware that in order for your client to engage in many of the activities discussed in this book, your client needs to be able to attend and behave appropriately. Sometimes use of a reward system where your client can get a desired toy, food, etc after they do their "work" is helpful. Other children may need different kinds of supports to help them with their behaviors and attending so that they are more readily available to learn. I have found that as a therapist it is often difficult to work on speech and language goals with a child that is demonstrating behavioral issues or with a child that has very poor attending. Many children need support in these areas before you will be able to address their speech and language goals. Information on behavioral strategies for young children can be found in the e-book "Insight for The New Speech Therapist and Beyond" This e-book contains many ideas for speech therapy for young children in numerous areas such as articulation, language, working with parents, sign language, behavior support and more.

General Ideas for Language

Overall, children develop language through hearing others and interacting with their environment. Rates and ages at which children acquire language vary, but in general, the first word may arise around 1 yr of age, a typical 18 month old may have up to 20 words, a typical 2 year old may be talking in short 2-3 word sentences, or at least combining words, a typical 3 year old may be talking in 5 word sentences, and a typical 4 and 5 year old may be able to have conversations with you using much vocabulary and grammar. Again- there is variability in this area and just because a child may not be.

Cooking activities (making pudding and more!)

Cooking is an excellent way to stimulate language. When children are part of the activity, it helps them learn. Cooking may also be a good activity when working with children in groups. An example of making pudding is below, however, any cooking activity can be used to stimulate language. Please note that when doing cooking activities (or any oral exercises involving food) with your client it is recommended that you speak with the parent regarding any possible food allergies.

Language Skills

The activity of making pudding can be used to stimulate language in many ways. See if your client can choose what kind of pudding he/she wants to make. Use vocabulary and label everything you are using such as the spoon, the bowl, the milk, etc. Give the child directions and ask questions- "Put the milk in",