

FUN ACTIVITIES TO ILLICIT LANGUAGE FROM CHILDREN

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Bubbles

Have the adult blow a preferred toy such as: bubbles, a party blower, a whistle, or a balloon (for children over three or who no longer mouth objects) If it is a balloon fill it with air, don't tie it, release the balloon, let it fly through the air and drop to the ground. Tell the child to pick it up (increasing their receptive language), call them to come using sign and verbal directions (receptive language), when they bring it to you place it in your mouth and prompt the child to tell you to "blow" by using spoken language or "actual blowing" (expressive language). Blow up the balloon and repeat the entire activity.

Parachute/Spandex/Blanket

Begin by placing the child on a small parachute or blanket. Sing a repetitive song: "Shake, Shake, Shake the parachute". When the child is fully involved in the game, abruptly stop shaking the parachute. The child must make the "shake" sign to get the parachute shaken again. Repeat the activity.

Jumping Games

Begin by placing the child on a trampoline or a small chair/object that they can jump off of. Engage the child in an enthusiastic repetitive jumping activity. As soon as the child is engaged and laughing temporarily interrupt the activity. Assist the child in making the "jump" sign and continue the activity. Interrupt frequently to encourage the child to make the sign more often.

This activity also works well if you place the child on a chair or bed. Each time they sign/say "jump" help them jump in an exciting manner. The bigger (more exciting) the jump the more likely they will want to repeat the game. The more they want to repeat the game, the more likely they will try to use the sign/word "jump".

Pulling Activities

Begin by placing the child in a wagon, or on a parachute. Pull them in a manner that makes them happy or engages them in the activity. As soon as the child is engaged and laughing temporarily interrupt the activity. Help them make the "pull" word/sign. As soon as they do, immediately continue the activity. The more they want to repeat the game, the more likely they will try to use the sign/word.

Rough and Tumble

Rough and Tumble is an extremely important tool to help facilitate requests. Play a socially engaging "rough and tumble" game with the child such as: Trot Trot to Boston, Up Up and Away, tag, This Little Piggy Went to Market. Repeat the game until the child can anticipate the exciting component of the game. Once the child has reached full excitement and anticipates your actions, stop what you are doing and freeze—wait for the child to use a gesture or word. Once the child makes a move indicating she understands, complete the action. The adult says, "I am going to [pause]". The child responds with some form of anticipation such as pulling hands, making eye contact, verbalizing, gesturing or giggling. The adult completes the sentence by saying, "'Tickle you".

Up

Have an adult help the child place hands in the “up” gesture, which is both hands up in the air. Immediately, pick the child up and give them a swing, a spin or a lift into the air in a pleasing manner. Place the child on the floor. Repeat the activity. Initially, you may need to pick them up many times prior to getting a sign. A more advanced step would be to work on “up” eye contact or “pick me up”. Repeat the activity several times and then try it with another adult.

Run, Walk, Chase Games

Start an exiting game that involves running, walking or chasing. Interrupt the game at an exciting place and prompt the child to give an appropriate direction to continue the game.

Eat/drink

Select any preferred snack item that can be eaten one by one. (Raisins, goldfish, popcorn, chips) A cookie could be used, but it must be broken into many small pieces. Feed the child the snack items one at a time by placing the food into their mouth and saying the word “eat”. Do this several times. Next, take the child’s hand and place it on their mouth, say the word “eat”, and then immediately place the food in their mouth. Repeat this many times. Watch for signs that the child is beginning to anticipate the game. Try holding the food 6 inches from child’s mouth and waiting to see if the child makes the eat sign. If they make the sign “eat” (or any variation of it) reward them with a snack. If they don’t, provide them with hand over hand assistance and then reward them. A good method of encouraging the “eat” sign is to take a snack item and place it at the child’s lips and then remove it. This will encourage them to bring their hand to their mouth retrieve the snack item.

If you would like to encourage reciprocal interaction, try feeding your child a snack item. When their mouth is full, have the adult sign “eat” and the child feed the adult.

Down

Allow your child to climb to the top of a slide. Interrupt them at the top of the slide and help them bring their hand down to touch the slide. This is the gesture for down.

Begin by engaging the child with a preferred toy or puzzle that has many small pieces. Spill the puzzle pieces onto the floor and give the child the form board and 1 or 2 puzzle pieces to get started. Tape the other pieces within their line of vision. Prompt them physically to make the “down” sign/word. Each time they do bring a piece of the puzzle down for them.

Singing

Start by singing a song the child enjoys. Demonstrate the motions (ie, wheels on the bus). Song sheets, song books and CD are available in the MILESTONES, INC. library.

1. Leave out a word and let the child fill in the blank
2. Leave out a motion and let the child fill in the blank
3. Let the child select the next “verse” or song using a picture board
4. Have the child imitate your motions.
5. Have the sibling imitate their motions.
6. Work on specific goals (what does a cow say? One step directions, people names)



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Silly Games

Any game that a child enjoys (laughs, smiles, participates, requests) is considered a silly game. (acchoo, throwing Elmo off the bed, peek a boo, hide and seek, funny sounds, tickles) See Rough and Tumble.

Toys

Playful obstruction/out of reach

Place a motivating toy out of reach of the child. (Alphabet puzzle taped on the wall, hang wind chimes in the middle of the classroom) Have an adult help the child place hands in the up “gesture”, which is both hands up in the air or say “up” or “pick me up”. When this happens, pick the child up so they can get the puzzle piece or jingle the wind chimes. Place the child on the floor and repeat the activity.

Open Games

Select a toy with many small pieces. (Puzzle, marble ramp, pennies in a jar) Give the receptacle to the child. Place one piece at a time in a container. Teach the child to sign/say open to get a preferred item or toy.

Open door or drawer

Open refrigerator

Open package of food

Open cover to sippy cup

Open an adult’s hands hiding a toy

Open a zip lock bag

I want

The objective is for the child to get many small objects or manipulatives 1 at a time. Select a toy with many small pieces and some type of receptacle such as: a puzzle, a pegboard, or pennies in a bank. Give the receptacle to the child. Have the child sign “give” in order to get a piece of the toys. Encourage the child to put the piece in the receptacle. Place one piece at a time in a container. Repeat the activity.

