

How Can Parents Help Their Children Build Strong Language Skills?

- Listen as much as you talk.
- Follow the child's lead—talk about things he/she is interested in.
- When you can, stop what you are doing and look at your child to show him/her you are interested in what he/she is saying.
- Name objects, people and events in your everyday world.
- Watch a favorite television program or video with your child. Talk about what you see during and after the show. *“He sounds happy. Why is he so happy?” “What would you do if that happened to you?”*
- Read books and talk about them.
- Tell stories about your childhood.
- Tell stories about when your child was a baby, or another family member or pet, was a baby.
- Talk about your family traditions and celebrations. For example, talk about how you celebrate birthdays.
- Sing songs and play rhyming games.

C.A.R.

- **C**omment on what your child is doing and wait. “Oh, you made a big house!”
- **A**sk questions and wait at least 5 seconds for your child to answer before saying anything more. (*Who, What, Where, Why do you think...?*)
- **R**espond by adding a little more new information or asking a follow-up question.

Adapted from:

Every Child Reads 3-5 Year Olds

Language is the Key: Washington Research Institute

PBS Families #14: Talking Together. WGBH Educational Foundation, 2002.