



SUMMIT ACADEMY

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Dear Parents & Guardians,

We want you to know that we are here for you during this time of uncertainty. We understand how difficult the current situation may be, and we want to provide as much support as possible.

As we all know, communication is a fundamental part of our daily lives and requires practice. Each child is unique in the way they communicate and the way they learn. Whether a child is verbal or uses AAC they need consistent exposure to language modeling and practice with both understanding others and expressing themselves.

To help you and your child during this extended time away from structured learning, we would like to provide you with some general information regarding how to address communication skills at home. Please review the following resources and tips for ways to encourage and enhance your child's communication skills.

Take advantage of everyday learning opportunities

Incorporating language-building strategies into daily life can help children develop communication skills. Here are some tips to help parents become more effective communication partners:

Help your child understand language:

- Get your child's undivided attention. Try getting down on his level and communicating face-to-face.
- Use simple, short sentences. If your child is nonverbal, using mostly single words can help with understanding. Use phrases and allow for processing time to help a child who's using single words or short phrases to communicate.
- Give your child time to respond to your language and offer support to help him follow through.
- Adding visual support strategies, including gestures, actual objects and pictures can help your child better understand you.

Promote expressive language development:

- Be aware of and responsive to your child's nonverbal communication, including gestures, sounds, looking at things they are interested in or even using repetitive speech patterns. Nonverbal communication builds the foundation for language, so it's important to be responsive to your child's communication attempts.
- Follow your child's interests and talk about what your child is doing and experiencing. Narrating playtime and activities helps socially connect your child and teaches new vocabulary. Adding new words to activities and building on your child's interests keeps language skills growing.
- Leave space to talk. Make sure your child has a turn to communicate. It may be difficult to not fill in the silence when your child doesn't respond but giving him time and then responding to his attempts helps him learn the power of his communication.
- Provide choices within everyday activities. Giving choices allows your child to express preference and gives you the opportunity to model new language.

The above information was provided by the Marcus Autism Center.

Read more about motivating your child to learn and try new things here: <https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/motivating-and-engaging-your-child-to-learn>

Additional Resources:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: Suggestions to promote language use based on age

<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/Speech-and-Language/>
<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/suggestions/>

SLP Freebies for COVID-10

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AtMu8cGiRjbi9yg1P5tmqEL1Cx7-mslHwBrfNP9u2MA/preview>

icommunicate speech & communication therapy

<https://www.icommunicatetherapy.com/speech-language-therapy-resources/speech-communication-resources/autism-resources/>

AssistiveWare: Language Opportunities for Using AAC at Home

<https://www.assistiveware.com/blog/language-opportunities-using-aac-home>

The Center for AAC & Autism: Using an AAC Device at Home

<https://www.aacandautism.com/assets/uploads/Using-a-Device-in-the-Home.pdf>

Mommy speech therapy: Ideas to work on articulation and printable word cards to practice speech sounds

<https://www.mommyspeechtherapy.com>

Speech and Language Kids: Articulation materials, visual aids for calming and printable vocabulary cards

<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com>

PECS USA: Under helpful info, free materials and downloadable books

<https://www.pecsusa.com>

If you have specific questions regarding your child's communication skills and needs please contact his/her speech-language pathologist via email or one of the coordinators of speech & language (contact information below). We hope to follow up with more tips and resources in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

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