

SPEECH THERAPY FOR TODDLERS CHEAT SHEET

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SELF-TALK

Talk about what you are doing, seeing, eating, touching, or thinking when your child is present. Narrate your actions - for example, "I'm washing the dishes. Now, I'm drying them. All done."

FOLLOW THE TODDLER'S LEAD IN CONVERSATION

Talk about what your child wants to talk about. If your child is touching the doll's hair, talk about the hair; if she is looking at the dog, talk about the dog. Acknowledge the child's words, phrases, and actions by saying something or doing something. Model or copy his actions, and then repeat and restate what he says. Be responsive to what he does or says, even if it's not a real word.

QUESTION A LITTLE, NOT A LOT

Don't overwhelm your child with too many questions. Remember to balance questions with comments. As a rule of thumb, saying three comments before asking one question works well.

PAUSE IN ANTICIPATION

Wait three to five seconds to give your child a chance to respond to what you have asked or said. Show that you are waiting expectantly by raising your eyebrows, smiling, and opening your mouth.

SENTENCE-COMPLETION TASKS

This technique is best suited for older children, or those who have stronger comprehension skills. Try pairing verbal cues with visual or tactile input. For example, while giving him his shirt, say, "Here's your shirt. Put on your _____." Additional prompting may include use of phonemic cues. A phonemic cue is when you give the first sound of the target word. They help children retrieve words and say them quicker. For example, while giving him his shirt, say, "Here's your shirt. Put on your sh_____."

PARALLEL TALK

Talk about what your child is doing, seeing, eating, or touching. Narrate what he is doing - for example, "Johnny's building a tower. Wow, That's a big tower!"

CHOICES

Give your child choices: "Do you want to eat crackers or grapes?" or "Do you want the cow or the horse?" Doing so puts indirect pressure on the toddler by presenting him with a concrete choice.

OOPS!

Forget something essential or skip an important step in a routine. Most children know when a routine has been violated and like to point it out.

GESTURES, PANTOMIME, OR SILLY SOUNDS

Use these to help the child understand your intentions. If you want his rubber duck, make the quack-quack motion with your hands (four fingers come together to touch the thumb) while saying "quack quack."

SET IT UP

Set up a scenario so that the child has to ask for help or assistance. Give him a box or bag you know he can't open, or give him a task you know he may struggle with, so that you can encourage him to ask for help.

EXPAND

Add grammatically correct information to your child's meaningful yet incomplete utterances. If your child says, "boy run," you could say, "Yes, the boy is running." Add in the missing words.



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