



## 11 Strategies to Teach New Words in Everyday Routines

STRATEGY	How It Looks	How It Sounds
Connect with a child by reading a child's cues and following a child's lead.	Notice what a child is paying attention to and talk to them about it. Join a child's play instead of redirecting his focus. Make yourself fun to watch and listen to. Respond to a child's nonverbal cues and attempts to communicate.	"What do you see out there? I see a bird. Is that what you see? Yes! A bird! Tweet tweet tweet." "I see you making holes in your Play-Doh. That's cool! I can make holes too. Look! My hole." "You're hot! Let's go inside and get a drink." "Oh! I heard you say, 'Chase!' Here's Chase!" "It's almost time for nap. Let's read our books!" "I know you like watching your show, but that's enough for today. How about we get your ball?" "It's time to clean up our toys. Let's put the toys in the basket. "Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere."
Set up your environment to create opportunities to communicate.	Organize your space by keeping toys organized, available, and rotated. Read books together daily. Offer limited amounts of high-quality screen time you watch together. Routines and schedules provide consistency, predictability, and security. Help a child transition.	"Give Mommy my keys. I need my keys. Give me the keys." "Look! My keys!" Point to the keys. "Yes! Give me the keys!" Hold out one hand while you use your other hand to take a child's hand, pick up the keys, and place them in your empty hand as you say, "Keys! Thank you! My keys!"
To teach a child what a new word means, "Tell him, show him, help him."	Give a child cues to help him understand new words. Begin by asking a toddler to complete a request (tell him). If he doesn't seem to know what to do, repeat the command, adding visual cues (show him). If he still doesn't complete the request, guide him by taking his little hands and completing the action (help him).	"Mommy wants to brush your hair, brush your hair, brush your hair. Mommy wants to brush your hair while you look at books." Change the reward and offer a new activity such as "play with cars."
Sing a song for everything!	Develop songs for as many of your routines as you can, especially if your child likes music and if the routine is somewhat challenging. Make up your own words for tunes or try those listed in this workbook.	If your late talker who is quiet likes his drink, model, "Mmmmmmm." When your kid reaches toward a banana, you say, "Banana!" As a child points toward a barking dog, say, "Look! Dog! Woof Woof!"
Give a child words with linguistic mapping.	When you notice that a child needs to say something but is not using words, give them the words they need by saying what they should say. Try to match their current language level.	When your child is in the bathtub, name his bathtub toys and use play sounds like, "What will we play with tonight? Let's see. Here's the duck. Duck. Quack Quack! Duck! There's your boat. Boat. "Honk! Honk!"
Simplify what you say with play sounds and single words to encourage imitation and build vocabulary.	Use simple sounds and words so that a child will try to repeat what you say and learn new words. Play sounds are words like "whee," "wow," and "boom," and other sounds we use in play like animal and vehicle sounds.	As your child plays, pick a word or two and repeat them many times like, "I see what you have...a bowl! A big bowl for cooking! I like that bowl. Bowl. I have a bowl!"
Repeat key words many, many times.	Repetition is how little kids learn everything! Research confirms that high-intensity modeling is very effective for teaching late talkers to begin to use new words.	As your child climbs up the slide and gets ready to slide, say, "Ready, set..." and wait for him to say, "Goooooo!" When you're singing a song, pause for your child to fill in the last word of a line. Play naming games so that a child learns to fill in when you say, "I see the ____."
Establish verbal routines and carrier phrases so a child can fill in the words.	Verbal routines are phrases you say every time you're doing an everyday routine or playing. These words become "automatic," and a child learns what comes next. Pause for a child to fill in the blank. Use your "tell me face" and expectant waiting to increase success. Carrier phrases are starters for requests like, "It's a ____."	Dad shows his daughter milk and says, "You're getting a yummy treat tonight...chocolate milk! Mmmmm milk!" Dad pauses to wait for her to say it. After a few seconds, he says, "I know what you want...milk. Tell me milk. Milk!" as he gives her milk.
Gently withhold items, cueing 3–5 times to increase a child's attempts.	Gentle withholding is holding onto an item a child wants as you model his target word 3–5 times before you give a child the item. Pause and use your "tell me face" and expectant waiting to encourage a child to make a request using the word. Give him the item even if he doesn't ask.	As you're preparing your child's lunch, offer lots of choices. Begin by saying, "Which cup do you want today, red or blue? What will you drink, milk or water? How about your plate, choo-choo, or Mickey? Etc."
Offer two choices for every step of a routine.	Choices are offering a child option A or option B and then keeping the choices going throughout the routine. By offering many choices, you'll greatly increase the number of words a late talker uses.	When a child says, "More," you say, "More" and add the item's name they're requesting. Extension is saying the adult version of what a child said. For example, the child says, "Bus go," and you say, "The bus is going."
Expand and extend what a child says.	Expansion is imitating any single word a child says, adding a related word, and repeating this phrase to the child. This helps a late talker move from words to short phrases and then from phrases to longer, more adult-like sentences.	