

1

NOT ANTICIPATING NEEDS OR DESIRES

Do not anticipate your child's every need or desire before he has a chance to make them known to you. If your child gets what he wants without communicating for it, he will not even bother to point, gesture, or possibly ask.

This also includes getting the cooperation of any older brother or sister to not talk for your child. An older brother or sister can often greatly help or hurt your speech and language stimulation efforts in many areas.

EXAMPLE: When your child is not with you, place one of his favorite toys or dolls up high where he can't reach it but where he can plainly see it. Later when he sees it, he will have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he wants the toy or doll.

EXAMPLE: When the family sits down to eat breakfast, and everyone has a spoon except your child, he will have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he wants a spoon, too.

EXAMPLE: If you put on only one of your child's shoes and then begin to act as if you're finished, he will again likely have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that you forgot to put on the other shoe.

EXAMPLE: If your child is used to watching some T.V. at a particular time, don't automatically turn it on for him. Wait for him to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he wants to watch T.V. Also, when you do turn it on for him to watch, occasionally leave off the sound. Again, he will have to communicate by pointing or otherwise that he needs the sound to the T.V.

DELAYING RESPONSES TO GESTURES

Delay your responses to your child's pointing, gestures, or babbling when he wants things. When your child points or gestures without attempting to talk, he is still trying to communicate, and you eventually do have to respond to his non-verbal communication. However, just pretend you don't understand what he wants for 15-20 seconds and then respond appropriately.

Whereas, if he attempts to say any meaningful word(s), you would respond appropriately to him right away. Show your child that the payoff for attempting to use words is much greater - things happen faster.

EXAMPLE: When your child points to a bottle of juice on the kitchen counter, you might say, "I'm not sure. Do you want a spoon? (pause); the ketchup? (pause); my pencil? (pause); your teddy? (pause)." Finally, you might say, "some juice? (pause) Oh, you want juice." Then as you hand him his cup of juice, you might add, "juice." But don't ask him or expect him to say the word juice right then.

EXAMPLE: When your child takes your hand and leads you to the front door because he wants to go outside, you might say, "What do you want? (pause); go nite-nite? (pause); watch some T.V.? (pause); get your dolly? (pause); I don't know — sit on the floor? (pause)." Finally, you might say, "go outside? (pause) That's what you want — to go outside! Next time tell me. Let's go outside." But again don't ask him or expect him to say the word(s) outside or go outside right then.