Dos and Don'ts

to Help Stimulate Oral Language in Young Children



Do	Don't
✓ Place yourself at the child's height, face to face	★ Speak to a child from across the room
 Pause often and wait during language activities for the child to comment or ask a question 	Speak continuouslyPause speaking but shift your focus
 Follow the child's lead and respond to their communication attempts by commenting 	Redirect the conversation away from the child's interests
✓ Allow the child time to formulate their requests	X Anticipate a child's request or finish their statement
 Maintain the conversation for at least four turns (two per person) 	Move on to another child after one conversational exchange
 Encourage children to communicate with one another 	Discourage children from communicating with one another
✓ Use more open-ended questions	X Ask a lot of yes/no and test-like questions
✓ Speak more slowly but naturally	X Speak quickly without pausing or over articulate
Model then pause and freeze to allow the child to spontaneously repeat what you said	➤ Ask the child to repeat your model
 Offer a choice or request clarification when you do not understand 	× Pretend to have understood
✓ Use language at a level close to the child's level	➤ Use ungrammatical or "telegraphic" language, i.e., language that omits small words like is, and, or tenses
 Repair and repeat the child's utterance, emphasizing the correction with your intonation 	Provide negative feedback when the child makes an error
 Evaluate a child's response and expand it by adding one or two words to what they said 	Simply evaluate a child's response, e.g., "Yes" or "That's right"
 Create opportunities for children to hear new vocabulary words many times in varied contexts 	× Move on too quickly to new themes and new words
Engage in interactive or dialogic book reading	Read through the book while the children listen quietly throughout
 Compare and contrast words and expressions from different languages – celebrate languages and cultures 	× Prevent students from speaking another language