



## Helping Children Use Language

1. Timely and positive responses by staff to meet the needs expressed by the children encourage children to use language because it gets results.
2. Crying can communicate a physical need such as hunger or diaper change needed.
3. Staff must be able to understand what the child is trying to say in order to respond correctly.
4. Crying can also be a sign of boredom in which the infant needs a different toy, wanting stimulating company or a change of scenery.
5. When the child hands a piece of dress-up clothes to the staff member, she provides a commentary as she helps him dress up. "Do you want to wear this shirt? Let me help you put it on. First the shirt goes over your head and now the arms go into the sleeves."
6. Correctly interpreting what a child is trying to communicate takes both skill and perseverance. It is important to keep trying and following through appropriately.  
Example: Child: "I want that!"  
Staff: "The sound shakers?"  
Child: "No! That! "  
Staff: "The container with the connecting fish?"  
They were up high, weren't they?"
7. Conversation involving staff and children taking turns at listening and talking help children develop expressive language skills.
8. Taking turns occurs back and forth alternating listening and talking.
9. Simple questions focus children's attention, even though they might not be able to answer them. If no answer comes from the children after a short while, staff can give answers in a simple sentence.  
"Where is Mia? Peek-a-Boo! There is Mia!"  
"What is eating the seeds in the bird feeder? A bird is eating the seeds."
10. It is important to keep a good balance between listening and talking. As Toddlers begin to say more, staff needs to give them more time to express themselves. By adding words and asking questions it should help and not substitute for the child's communication.

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