

# Speech and Language

## Strategies for Children Who are Beyond the Basics

Parent Workshop 2013

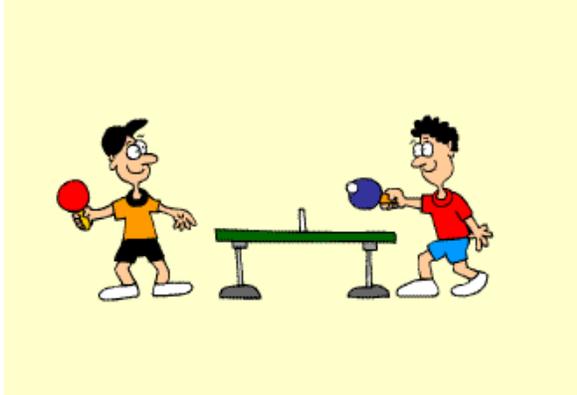
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### Areas of speech and language development



## Reciprocity in Conversation

Conversation is like a game of Ping Pong! The ball has to bounce back and forth!



Encourage your child to use “boomerang” phrases: Answer + **you?**

Examples: I’m good, **you?**  
I like it, **what about you?**

Teach functional questions to keep conversation going. If your child does not know what to ask, be explicit and tell him.

Examples: I went to a movie → **What movie?**  
I went to grandma’s for lunch → **What did you eat?**

If your child takes too many turns, use the “3 things” rule.

Example: Tell me three things about your day and then it’s your brother’s turn.

## Being aware of others

Share opinions and make sure your child retains what the other person likes/does not like.

Have your child be the one to “take inventory” of another person’s likes/dislikes.

Examples:

Ordering pizza: I don’t like mushrooms but daddy does. We all like pepperoni. Let’s get pepperoni on the whole pizza and mushrooms on half.

Choosing a gift (more difficult): Have your child ask his friend or family member what they like to do and then come up with a list of gift ideas.

## Interpreting body language

Draw attention to body language AND the context.

His arms are crossed and his shoulders are up. He's smiling and he's in a swimming pool. HE'S COLD!



VERSUS...

Her arms are crossed and her eyebrows are furrowed. Someone just undid her Lego tower. SHE'S ANGRY! I could ask "what's wrong?" and try to help.



Her hands are on her hips. Her eyebrows are furrowed (they could also be raised) and she's leaning forward. We were screaming and jumping off the couch. SHE'S ANGRY.



VERSUS...

Her hands are on her hips. She's smiling. I'm doing a puzzle. SHE'S HAPPY.



Tell your child explicitly what you EXPECT from him with regard to your body language (outside of the heated situation). Example: When I cross my arms and put my eyebrows up, it means I'm not happy. I want you to stop what you're doing and listen to me.

You can also draw attention to what your child's body language is telling others  
E.g. When your back is turned to me, I think you don't care about what I'm saying. It hurts my feelings.

## Interpretation in reading

Reading doesn't just mean decoding words, it also means interpreting the words, or what we call "reading between the lines".

Some questions are direct and the answer can be found in the text.

Other questions are like **puzzles**... you have to find clues in the text, **put the pieces together** and then **think of the answer yourself**.



### Story 1

One cold Monday morning in November, Niko woke up for school. He got dressed and had breakfast. He put on his coat and shoes and was ready to leave for the bus. He opened the front door and saw white everywhere! Now he had to go back inside and change his clothes.

What day of the week was it?

What season was it?

Where was Niko going that day?

What did Niko see outside his front door?

Why does Niko have to change his clothes?

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### Story 2

Sam was so excited. Today was the big day! All the decorations were put up; balloons, streamers and hats. Sam even saw the cake in the fridge and it already had six candles on it. Just then, the doorbell rang. It was Sam's friends. Later, Sam opened his presents. The first one was from Josh. Once unwrapped, Sam frowned. Then Josh frowned too.

What was the "big day"? How do you know that?

How old is Sam turning? How do you know that?

Why did Sam frown when he opened the present from Josh?

Why did Josh frown?

**Interpretation of sayings**

“That’s a piece of cake” = that’s so EASY!



“Let’s go for a bite” = let’s get something to EAT.



Other sayings (not all nice ones, but can be heard in children’s movies!)

Explain the real meaning and what it means in the context (it’s not always easy!):

Let’s get the ball rolling

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Oh, get over it!

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We have to go back to square one.

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Hold your horses!

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Cut it out!

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Hit the sack!

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Put a lid on it!

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He’s in hot water!

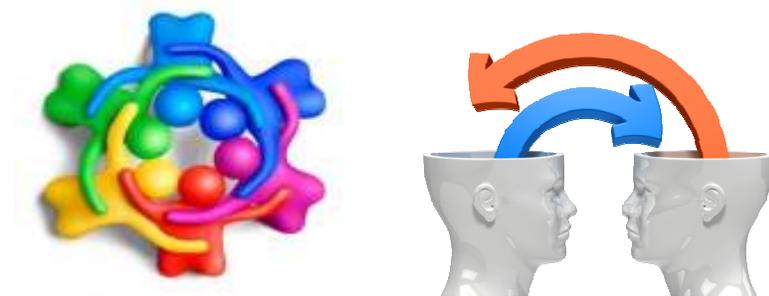
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I’m just pulling your leg

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## **Playing games TOGETHER!**

“Cooperate and compromise” means working together and making sure that each person gets a little bit of what they want.



Examples of games and activities:

**Card games**, e.g. Go Fish

Inviting someone to play, understanding strategy, playing to win but accepting loss.

**Action-packed board games**, e.g. What a Performance

Some board games are not based on winning but more on being silly and having fun together.

Don't feel you have to use every part of a game if it's too complicated or confusing.

Focus on successfully engaging together, not on the details of the game.

**Cooperative building activities**, e.g. marble maze, Lego, cooking

Choose the activity together (e.g. choose a recipe and make a list together if cooking)

Share ideas of what you will do at each stage (e.g. I think we should build 4 towers and connect them in the middle)

Talk out disagreements and find a “middle ground” by compromising.