

Suggestions for Toddlers

Take time to listen to your child. Life is hectic! Find 10 minutes a day to be together with your child, just to visit. Make it child-directed time; you take your child's lead. Joint attention to an activity is an important pre-requisite for communication development. Let your child show you what is important and interesting to him/her, and you explore that toy or activity together.

Take turns with your toddler. Social turn-taking develops before verbal turn-taking (You talk while I listen; I listen while you talk.) Practice social turn-taking by rolling a ball back and forth, putting shapes in a shape sorter, placing pegs on a pegboard ... Anything that requires taking turns and that's fun! For turn-taking, use predictable words like, "Ready, set, go!" Eventually your child will complete the phrase when you say, "Ready, set ... " by saying, "Go!"

Use pronouns (I, me, you, he, she, they, etc.) Your child knows who you are, but needs to learn more about language structure. Saying, "Give it to me," will be more effective than, "Give it to Mommy."

More pronoun fun: The best way I know to encourage young children to use the pronoun "I" (instead of "me") is to have several family members or friends around. Have something really fun/ tasty to play with or eat. Ask, "Who wants ... (e.g., ice cream)?" and respond by modeling the correct response, "I do!" Have the other friends or family members also model the correct response, which can also be, "I don't!"

Use music. Make up silly songs to go along with daily routines such as tooth brushing, taking a bath, and putting on PJ's.