

# Child Language Learning

Throughout the preschool years, children continue to learn new words and use language in new ways when interacting with others. You can support your child's language learning in everyday interactions through simple conversations about his or her ideas and interests. By responding to your child and encouraging him or her to try saying new and different things, you can help your preschooler become a talkative partner.

**Watch a video of this Learning Guide**

## Learning Guide: Promoting Preschoolers' Language Learning Skills

- Figure out which everyday activities at home and in the community match your child's interests and give your child chances and reasons to communicate. Give your child lots of opportunities to participate in those kinds of activities.
- During those everyday activities, attend to what interests your child. Shift your attention to what captures your child's attention.
- Pay attention to when and how your child says something, or tries to communicate with you. Notice how your child expresses ideas, wishes, needs, and requests. Attend to how your child describes events and experiences.
- Respond positively when your child tries to communicate with you. Repeat what your child says. Talk about what your child is doing. Join in the interaction with your child and take turns. Praise your child and show him or her that you are pleased and excited about the interaction.
- During any interaction, help your child try to say something new or different. Respond to your child in a way that slightly adds to what your child says. You can do this in a variety of ways:
  - Repeat what your child says, adding new words and information.
  - Ask an open-ended question about your child's interests.
  - Do something silly or surprising that gets your child to say something different.
- Provide many opportunities for your child to use new language during everyday activities with you. Join in conversations with your child during playtimes and routines. Involve your child in word play by playing rhyming games, doing finger plays, singing silly songs, naming opposites, or having fun with guessing games such as I Spy. Encourage your child to tell you about an interesting experience of the day, retell the story of a favorite book, or create an original story. Have fun!!



### A Quick Peek

Three-year-old Micah and his uncle, Owen, walked through a field on one of their favorite hikes. Micah ran ahead and picked a dandelion, shouting gleefully, "Look!" Owen smiled as he caught up to Micah and said, "What did you find?" Micah responded, "A lion!" Nodding, Owen said, "Yes, it's a dandelion. It's fuzzy isn't it?" Micah gently felt the dandelion, saying, "Fuzzy dandelion." Suddenly Owen blew into the air. Surprised, Micah giggled and asked, "Whatcha doin'?" Owen responded, "I wonder what would happen if we blow on the dandelion?" Micah puffed on the dandelion and squealed as it blew away. Together Micah and Owen took turns finding and talking about the dandelions as they continued on their hike.

### You'll know the practice is working if ...

- Your child joins in and stays involved in conversations with you.
- Your child enjoys interacting with you.
- Your child uses more words and combinations of words to tell you something when interacting with you.

More fun ways to encourage language development for preschoolers can be found online. See the PBS site for [Language Milestones](#) and [Talking Milestones](#). The Get Ready to Read site is an idea-packed resource for [Understanding Language Development](#).