

While we're all at home, there are still ways you can boost your child's speech and language development. Try some of these to keep up the skills we have been working on:

Reading Books

Reading books is great exposure to language and vocabulary. Here are more ways to include speech and language skills:

- Have your child point to certain pictures as a labeling task. For instance, you can say, "point to the elephant," or make it more challenging by saying, "Point to a big, grey animal."
- Ask your child questions about what you have read. These can be factual questions (Who? What? Where?) or inferential questions (why...? How...? What might happen next...?)
- Have your child retell the story to you. Try using sequencing words like first, next, last.
- If your child is working on producing certain sounds, look for them in books and practice saying them.
 - For a list of books that are loaded with certain speech sounds, check out: <https://www.speechsproutstherapy.com/2015/01/sound-loaded-storybooks-for.html>
- If you need more books, check out Epic! <https://www.getepic.com/>

Playing Games

Lots of games you have at home address speech and language skills. Here's a list of some of our favorites:

- Scattergories Junior: Teams work to come up with different members of different categories (ie. sports, desserts, winter clothes). The twist is that each thing you name has to start with a certain letter. This game works on our understanding of categories and how words go together.
- 5 Second Rule Junior: In this fast-paced game, your job is to name three items of a given category in just five seconds. This game works on our understanding of categories, word associations, and thinking on your toes!
- Headbanz: Every player has a picture on their forehead that they cannot see. Your job is to guess what is on your head by asking yes/no questions. This game works on our understandings of categories and item features.
 - Alternative play: Instead of asking and answering questions, players can instead describe the pictures to each other. For instance, provide a description such as, "You are a type of transportation that travels in the sky."
- Heads Up: This is a smartphone app that is very similar to Headbanz. Players hold the phone up to their forehead and a word is displayed. The other players have to describe this word in order to get the player whose turn it is to guess the word correctly.
 - Alternative play: You can also use gestures/act it out to get the player to guess the correct word. The app has a feature that video tapes the players acting it out, too, which can be fun.
 - Note: some decks are easier than others. I like the Animals deck and the Just for Kids decks.

- Apples to Apples Junior: In each round of this game, a judge puts down a green (adjective) card. All the other players play a red (noun) card that “goes with” the adjective word on the green card. The judge decides which red card is the best. The person who put down that card wins the round. This game works on word associations and parts of speech. Clever players think about the judge’s personality and perspective when putting down a card, too.
 - Alternative: Add in this fun element - each player must make an argument as to why their red card is the best match. This adds in work with creating clear arguments, reasoning, sentence formulation, and public speaking.
- Taboo: Your job is to get your team to guess a certain word by giving clues and describing the word on the card. The twist is that there is also a list of ‘taboo’ words that you cannot use in your description.
 - Alternative: Instead of worrying about the ‘taboo’ words, use them to help you in your descriptions. As you get better at formulating good descriptions, then try playing the true way where you cannot say the ‘taboo’ words.
- Guess Who?: Try to guess which character card your opponent has by asking yes/no questions. This game works on vocabulary, item features, asking questions, and process of elimination.
- Blurt: This game works on listening skills and vocabulary. Listen to a description of a word and “blurt” out the correct word. If you’re the first one to blurt it, you advance on the gameboard. The first player to make it around the board wins!
- Bubble Talk: Match funny or very silly pictures with funny captions. This helps children try to figure out the best title for pictures. Practice creating grammatically-correct sentences and explaining why something happened while also getting a good laugh!
 - Alert - unfortunately some pictures and captions are not ok for all ages, and an adult should pull pictures and captions before your child plays the game.
- Rhyme Out: Players take turns drawing cards from the box and reading three clues aloud. The other players try to be the first to answer with three rhyming words that match the clues.
- Rory’s Story Cubes: roll the cubes and make a story about the pictures you get. You can use just one or two cubes to inspire a story, or try to make a story using all the pictures you have. Follow a story frame such as Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then to give it a little more structure.

Word Games

- Would You Rather? Make up silly or serious questions and practice answering them by turning the question around, using complete sentences, and giving reasons why you chose your answer.
- I Went To The... Pick a place and try to name all the things you might see there. For example, “I went to the beach and saw a shovel, pail, towel, wave, whale, etc...”
- Letter Scavenger Hunt: Starting with A and working your way to Z, try to find all the letters of the alphabet on signs, packages, and everyday household items

- Charades: Act out different animals, actions, jobs, etc. without making a peep!
- I Spy: Pick a secret item and give 3 clues to help your partner guess your item

Apps

- Food Frenzy: kids pretend to work in a restaurant and have to fulfill orders. You can customize the level, the concepts addressed, and the allotted time to complete the direction.
- Fun With Directions: touches on a variety of language concepts with varying levels of directions. All can be customized in settings.
- Webber Hear Builder Auditory Memory (hit “take a tour” on the bottom right hand side to access without making an account): As a spy, you catch villains by using active listening skills
- Comparative Adjectives: touch the item that matches the description
- Articulation Station: provides flashcards with pictures for speech sounds at the word, phrase, sentence, and story levels. You can buy only the speech sounds your child is working on.
- Puppet Pals: you pick your puppet or upload your own photo and record a story about it

Other Activities to Try:

Cook/Bake Something Together

- Practice following the directions of a recipe. Use sequential language such as, “First we add the tomatoes, then we stir it all together, and last we add seasoning.”
- Use spatial concept words such as *in*, *on*, *on top*, *next to*, as much as possible.
- Talk about the textures, tastes, smells, and colors of the foods. Use descriptive words.

Use sidewalk chalk

- Draw pictures using sidewalk chalk and have your child describe the pictures using color, shape, and size words
- Draw a hopscotch game and write speech words in each square. These could be words your child is working on pronouncing (ie. they contain their speech sounds) or vocabulary words that they then have to use in a sentence.

Watch a movie

- ...and use some of the same strategies as you would when you read a book
- Ask your child questions about what is happening, why characters feel certain ways, what might happen next, etc.
- Talk about the different characters’ personality traits. Compare and contrast the characters.
- Think of other ways the characters could have solved problems. Come up with silly solutions and talk about why they might not have worked.

Go on a scavenger hunt

- Give your child descriptions of things to find in your home. These could be vague, such as, “Find something large and blue” or specific, such as, “Find something that you use to dry your hands.”
- If your child is working on speech sounds, have them find items that contain their sounds and then have them label the item.