Speech and Language Therapy Ideas for Parents

1. Schedule a time in your calendar to give direct instruction for speech and language therapy to your child. This will help them to continue to maintain or progress their skills during elearning.
2. If you need help with knowing what to do with your child, please contact your speech therapist and they can help you get started by teaching you the level your child is at and goals you should focus on.
3. I highly suggest to develop a “toy” bag of items that you might use while you are working with them. I would choose toys, books, puzzles that they don’t see every day. This will help create more interest for them. Examples: books, puzzles, games, play dough, paint. This can be something special that they get to do with you each week during your speech and language lesson.
4. If your child is just learning to talk, we encourage you to play with them, but use structured play. Pull out one item at a time. Don’t allow them to dump all the toys out because then they will not be able to focus on learning what you have to teach them. Have them look at you when you say the word. If they are having difficulty looking at you, put the toy up beside your mouth. If they still have difficulty, then gently guide their hands to your cheeks. This almost always guides their eyes to watch you say the word. If they cannot say the whole word, just have them imitate the first sound in the word and then give them the toy. If they are at a level where he/she needs to practice two or three word phrases, then make up a short phrase about each object and have them imitate that phrase. Once you have completed one activity, put those materials away and get out a new one. This will help them stay focused.
5. Answering “wh” questions: If your child is just starting to learn this skill, start with “what” and “where” questions. “What do you do with a \_\_\_\_\_\_?” is a great question to start with. “Where is your ball?”. A great game to play is hide and seek with a toy and have them find it and then ask “where was the ball?” If they can’t answer, tell them and have them imitate it or give them a choice of two answers and see if they say the correct answer. If your child is able to answer easy “wh” questions, then work on more difficult ones such as “when” and “why”. These types of questions can be offered during everyday activities such as when they are brushing their teeth, you can ask “why do we brush our teeth?” or “why do we eat” or “when do we take a bath?” or “when do we got to bed? Hopefully this gives you some direction to help your child learn to answer “wh” questions.
6. PREPOSITIONS/CONCEPTS: such as “on, in, up, down, under, over, beside, behind, on top, etc.” The hide and seek game works great with this also. You can also create an obstacle course and have them jump over, crawl under, go around, climb up, climb down, go through or between. This helps develop vocabulary and they have fun and burn energy. It also works on following directions and action-word vocabulary depending on how you set up your obstacle course. Hiding plastic eggs is something children love to do multiple times and can be used while doing the learning skills above. You can work on following directions and action words by having them crawl to the pink egg, hop to the green eggs, skip to the blue egg. Then when they get there, you can ask “where was the egg?”. Most of the things you do while playing with your child can be turned into a language lesson.
7. ARTICULATION: Here are some tips for this area. You will need to know from your therapist, what level your child is at. Your therapist will be able to tell you what sound to focus on and at what level such as: isolation (sound by itself), broke-apart word level, word level, phrase level, sentence level, or conversation. This will help you to work with your child and help them have success. Practicing sounds can be done while playing any game, painting, or doing an outdoor activity. For example: if they are swinging on the swing, you can stop the swing and have them say 5 words with their sound, then push them again or they have to say a word before they go hide during hide and seek. Before the choose a color to use on the sidewalk, they have to say three words. These are all ways that can make therapy fun while helping them learn.
8. P/B/M: This is a family of sounds. All three of these sounds are made with the lips together. Have your child watch your lips so they can imitate you. Try it yourself and feel your lips push together and pop open on /p,b/. The air goes through your nose on the /m/ sound.
9. T/D/N: This is another family of sounds. All three of these sounds are made with the tongue tip behind the top front teeth. Have your child watch you say /t,d/. Try it yourself and feel where your tongue is located. When you produce /n/, the airflow will go through your nose.
10. /K/G/. This is a family of sounds. Both of these sounds are made with the back part of your tongue arching up to touch the top back part of your palate. Try to say /k/ on your own and feel where your tongue is. Make sure you know what level your child is at before working on these sounds. You can practice /k/ by itself by making a “scary cat noise” “kkkkkkkkk”.
11. /F/: To make an /f/ sound, you use your top teeth to gently bite your bottom lip and blow air through the friction of your top teeth and bottom lip. Try making this sound and feel how your teeth touch your lip as you blow air through.
12. /S/: To make this sound, your tongue tip is behind your bottom teeth and you blow air. Your teeth should be partially closed like when you smile. Try making this sound and feel where your tongue is on your teeth as you blow air.
13. /W/: To make this sound, your lips are rounded and pushed outward, then open your mouth to say “wa”. Practicing says “wa” and feel how your lips make this sound. This will help you teach your child.
14. /H/: To make this sound, open your mouth and blow air. Practice by saying “ha” and feel how the air blows as you push it out with your mouth open.

I hope these tips help everyone to understand speech and language therapy better. If you need help or have questions, please contact your therapist so they can guide you. We all want to help you in the best way we can. Thank You!! – J. Bailey