



HORIZONS

PLAYSPACE

Supporting Children's Communication Skills
Building Positive Connections

Why is developing communication skills so important?



Communication is the need to connect with others by sharing ideas and feelings, both verbally and non-verbally. Most children learn to communicate to get their needs met or to establish and maintain interactions with others.



SPEECH

The sounds we make with our mouth and how we string them together to construct words.

LANGUAGE

Understanding and using words and sentences.

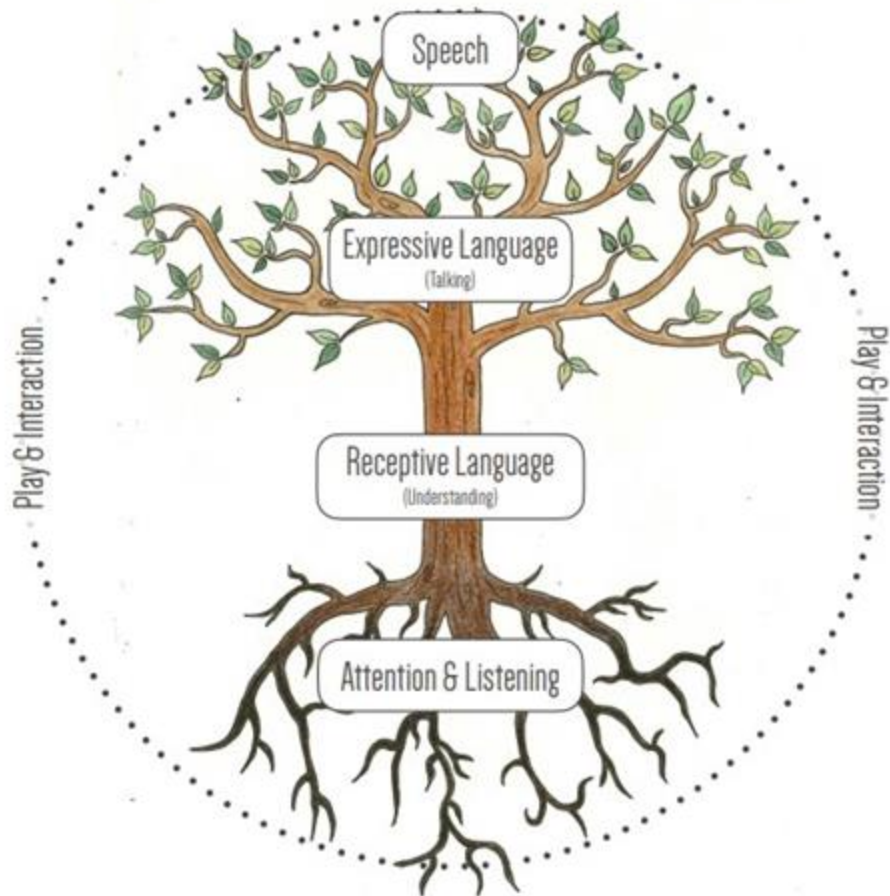
COMMUNICATION

How we get our message across (including non-verbal communication) and how we relate to others.



The Communication Tree

Just like a tree, each of the skills involved in communication need to work and grow together.



0-12 Months

- Babies communicate through sounds
- Facial expressions
- Gestures/body movements
- Crying is their first method of communication
- Actively listen and respond
- Use simple one and two word phrases



1-3 Years

- Make plenty of mistakes
- Actively listen to a child
- Be patient and be calm
- Answer questions using two and three word phrases language
- Children will often interrupt adult conversations



3-6 Years

- Listen attentively to a child without distractions
- Let the child know they have your attention
- Try asking open-ended questions
- Respect their point of view
- Try to avoid interrupting or criticizing
- Reflect back



Things to remember when talking and listening to children

- Make eye contact
- Give them time to respond
- Give visual choices
- Hold object near your mouth
- Observe and copy what the child is doing
- Pay attention and take turns
- Try not to finish their sentences
- Respect the child's feelings
- Give words of encouragement and praise.



Commenting

- Talk about what the child is doing.
- Use short phrases and repeat key words.
- Responsive Labeling: Name what the child is playing with, e.g., “That’s a ball.”
- Self-Talk: Describe your own actions, e.g., “I’m rolling the ball.”
- Parallel Talk: Describe what the child is doing, e.g., “You’re kicking the ball.”

Early Hand Signs

mine



Pat chest with open hand.

more



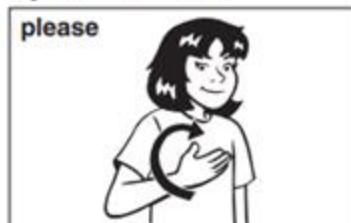
Tap the fingertips of both hands together several times.

done



Flip hands to palms out.

please



Place palm on chest & move it around in a circular motion.

eat



Place fingertips against lips, like putting food in your mouth.

drink



Make a "cup" with your hand. Bring "cup" to mouth in a drinking motion.

thank you



Touch lips with fingers, move hand away from mouth with palm up.

play



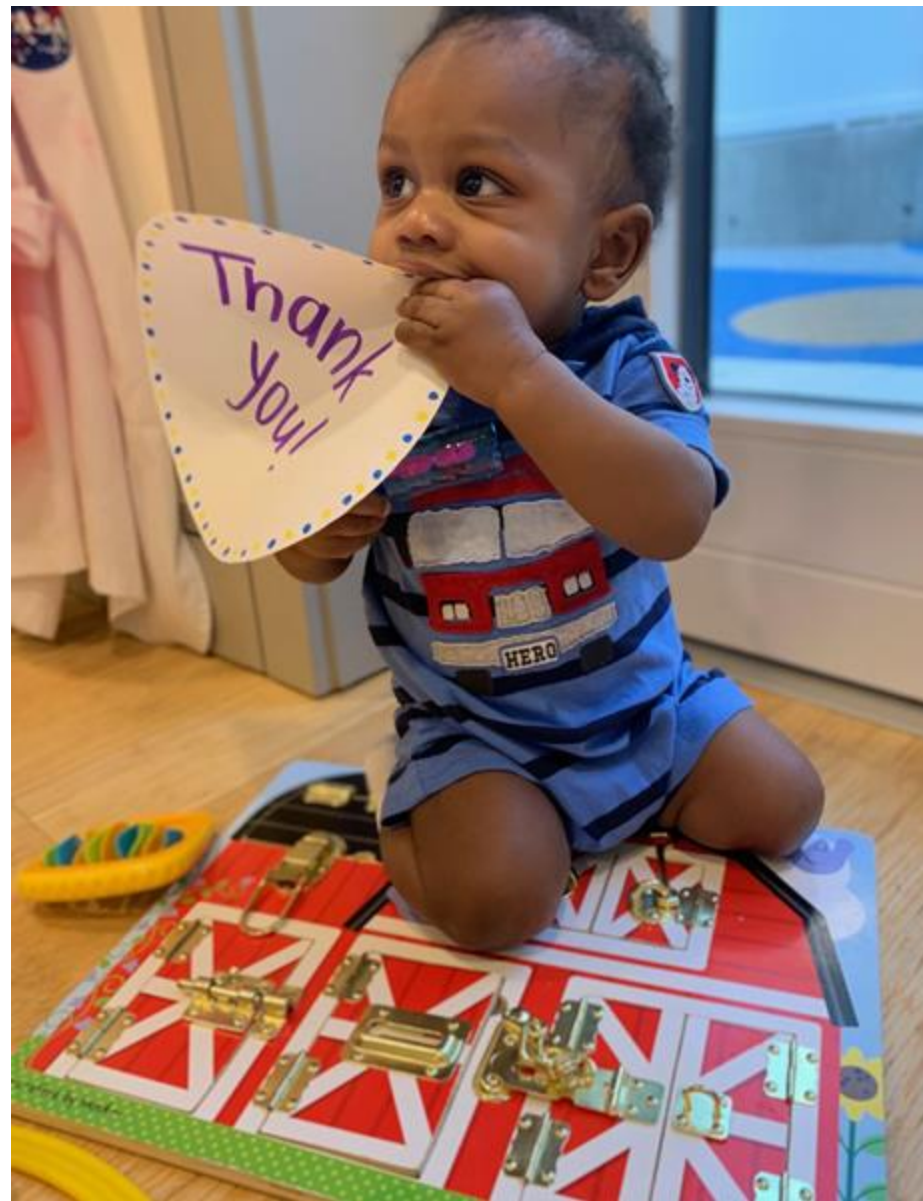
Make a fist with both hands extending thumb and pinkie. Then, rotate hands up and down.

HOW TO USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE TO GET YOUNG KIDS TO LISTEN TO YOU



Don't run	→	Please walk
Don't jump	→	Please go down slowly
Don't yell	→	Please use a quiet voice
Don't hit	→	Please be gentle
Don't ride your bike so fast	→	Please slow down
Don't throw the toys	→	Please put them gently on the ground
Don't talk to me like that	→	Please use kind words
Don't grab the toy out of another kid's hands	→	Please use your words and ask for the toy
Don't play with the ball in the house	→	Please only use the ball outside
Don't slam the door	→	Please close it gently / without making noise
Stop that loud tantrum	→	I'm here for you, tell me what happened
Don't interrupt me	→	Please wait until I finish talking





Thank you for joining us today!