

Come Talk With Me



a monthly newsletter produced by
USC Caruso Family Center
for Childhood Communication

Volume 1 • Issue 4 • May 2016

This month is Better Speech and Hearing Month! Celebrate your child's efforts, your efforts and the support of your providers!



Audiology

- As the seasons change and your child starts playing outside in the warmer weather, be sure that you are using your dry and store containers or Zephyr. Moisture can damage your child's hearing technology. If you use a dry and store container, make sure you replace your desiccant tablets every 2 months.
- Make sure your child is wearing their hearing technology during all waking moments, from the time they wake up until the time they go to sleep. An example, if a child has only four hours a day of CI or HA use only (e.g. at pre-school for the morning session), this child will need to listen for 6 years to hear the same amount of spoken language as a child who is typically developing during ONE calendar year.

Words matter

- As you discuss family members, now would be a good time to practice our describing skills. What attributes about your family members can you discuss? Who has long hair/short hair/curly hair/straight hair? You can describe them by an identifiable piece of jewelry or a favorite hat they always wear. You can describe them based on something they are known for doing such as a job or being funny or always having a treat. Have fun with this to help your child learn more about their family members.
- Practice making comparisons with your child. You can talk about siblings and who is older or younger? Taller or shorter?



Parent Strategies

- Provide your child with wait time. When you ask your child a question, provide them an opportunity to communicate or ask them to follow an instruction, count to 10 to yourself before you repeat what you said or help out your child. Children need time to process what they have heard and how they would like to respond.
- Create opportunities to take turns. Whether your child is young and working on early imitation of speech sounds or older and working to develop conversational skills, turn taking is a crucial component to language development. Language skills are best learned by active communicators rather than passive ones.
- Reward all attempts at communication that your early communicator may make. We want to encourage frequent conversational turns to encourage your child to spontaneously communicate more often.



Read On!

Good book recommendations from our staff:

- **Are You My Mother?** By P.D. Eastman
- **Llama Llama Misses Mama** by Anna Dewdney
- **Time for Bed** by Mem Fox
- **The Kissing Hand** by Audrey Pen
- **Sarah Plain and Tall** by Patrica MacLachlan
- **If I Could Keep You Little** by Marianne Richmond
- **Runaway Bunny** by Margaret Wise Brown



When reading with your child....

- This month, make time to focus on writing. Send a card or a letter to someone. Leave notes in your child's lunch box or under your child's pillow.
- A good strategy to support an early writer is to share the pen. This includes drawing pictures together, labeling pictures together and writing sentences together that help tell their story. Their story could be about something exciting that they saw or did during that day.



Let's chat

- Using clauses is an excellent way to expand your child's utterances. You can use this time to talk about something from your childhood. "When I was young, I had a pet dog to take care of." Or "Before I was in high school, I used to go to the park every day."
- For the younger child, practice using the phrase, "Give it to..." For example, on Mother's Day, your child can help direct everyone with cards, flowers, gifts or other special objects of thanks for their mother.
- If/Then clauses are used frequently by parents and teachers. Work with your child to improve their understanding and use of these clauses. "If we make mommy a card for Mother's Day, then she will feel grateful." "If we make mommy pancakes for breakfast, then you can eat some too!"

Social Stars

- As we focus on written language this month, think about writing a thank you letter to one of your providers from your child. Your child can draw a picture, scribble, write a word, or write a message. For the older child be sure to have the conversation about what they are specifically thankful for.
- Children learn by example. Using words that show consideration and kindness are important for children to use toward their family, friends and others. Help them to make kind comments or statements of affirmation. These important conversational turns create greater relationships with the individuals in your child's world.
- To support the development of theory of mind during this month of Mother's Day, talk about what your child's mother likes, loves and doesn't like. Use this information to plan a special day for her on Mother's Day.

