



## Helping Your Toddler With Talking

### Wait and Respond

Life is busy for everyone especially when you have toddlers or young children at home. Yet, waiting is a powerful way that we can help youngsters develop language skills. When children have few words, it's tempting for adults to do all the talking. If your child is naturally passive or not so confident this may mean that they don't get a chance to try out new skills and to interact fully in conversations.



### Why wait?

- You and your child will feel more relaxed
- Your child will be less passive and more confident
- Your child will have an equal chance to join in
- Some children need longer to find the words they know
- Some children need more time to understand your talk

### How do I wait and respond?

Try the following in your everyday routines or play times together:

- Wait for your child to comment, react, or ask for more with a gesture or a word. For example, if you are getting ready to go out.
  1. Get your child's boots.
  2. Look at your child expectantly.
  3. Pause and give your child the opportunity to communicate.
  4. Wait at least 10 seconds.
  5. If your child does not say anything after you have waited, say the words that they could have said. For example you could say "Put on your \_\_\_\_\_". Wait for your child to fill in the word "boots".
  6. If your child does not respond say "Boots. Put on your boots."
- Be available to help your child in talking situations, but wait for your child to request "help". They may do this by making eye contact, bringing the object to you, making a sound, or saying "help".
- Using non-verbal approaches helps your child to understand that they can join in. For example, if you are playing and something falls, you can show exaggerated surprise, look at your child and wait for them to respond.
- Accept all your child's attempts to communicate after you have waited. Even if the words are not clear, your child is learning about important skills like taking turns and shared attention. You can say the words that you think they have said back to them to let them hear the right form but don't ask them to copy just yet.
- Most importantly if you wait and allow your child to attempt a response, they are learning that communication is fun and that they can join in!