



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE
THERAPY PRACTICE

Teaching Language Skills Through Play: Reading Books Together

In order to promote language development and successful play skills you need to incorporate the following when engaging in play with your child:

- Model language and appropriate play for your child to copy.
- Join your child at play. Your child is more likely to respond if you are engaging with a toy / activity that they are interested in.
- Comment on what you and your child are doing. Your comments should be short and focused on their play.

Below are some ideas you can use when you are reading books with your child. Pick a couple of ideas that you feel comfortable with and give them a go!

- Find storybooks that match your child's interest, are at the correct language level for your child (if your child is using single words, then naming books or books with two-word phrases would suit), and that are colourful and engaging.
- You don't always have to read the story to your child. You can look at the pictures together and talk about what you see, what is happening and what might happen next.
- When reading a story make sure you emphasize important words, especially if they are new words for your child. Explain what they mean and give examples.
- Make sure that you are an engaging reader when reading storybooks together. Use changes in tone, pace, volume, and make noises where appropriate in the story.
- While reading the story, stop every now and then and ask your child some simple questions. This will increase your child's auditory comprehension skills. It will also build up their ability to answer who, where, what, when, why and how questions.
- After reading the story, set up a related activity to complete together e.g. if the main character is a chicken, find a chicken toy to play with or a chicken colouring in game.

- If the story relates to one of your child's recent experiences, talk about this with them e.g. when they went on a trip to the farm. What was your child's favourite memory from this trip?
- If the story has the same character/s as another book you have recently read, discuss how they are the same / different e.g. "Hairy Maclary got in trouble last time, did he get himself into trouble this time too?"
- Read favourite stories several times, as repetition is important in language development. Once your child is familiar with the story, read part of a sentence and ask your child to finish it for you.
- Once your child is familiar with the story, ask them to tell you the story using the pictures as prompts.

Check out the other Speak To Me "Teaching Language Skills Through Play" worksheets for more ideas to try at home.