

Daily Speech Strategies

A phone-friendly parent guide for building language during everyday routines.

1 Connect

2 Wait

3 Model

Use one small strategy for 5 minutes a day.
Keep it playful, calm, and pressure-free.

START HERE

The 3-step routine

Before you worry about words, build a calm shared moment.



1 Get calm + connected

Get face-to-face, reduce distractions, and join what your child is already interested in.

2 Pause + notice

Watch for communication: looking, reaching, pointing, sounds, words, gestures, or body movement.

3 Model one small thing

Say or show a word/gesture your child could use. Then wait again.

STRATEGY 1

Start in the green zone

Children learn and communicate best when they are calm, alert, and ready.



GREEN — **Calm, alert, interested**

Try language practice now.

YELLOW — **Fussy, restless, frustrated**

Simplify. Offer help. Lower demands.

RED — **Very upset or overwhelmed**

Pause teaching. Help your child calm first.

Try this: take three calm breaths, make the activity shorter, or switch to something familiar.

STRATEGY 2

Offer two clear choices

Choices give your child control and create an easy reason to communicate.



How to do it

Hold up two real items.
Name each one: "apple or banana?"
Accept pointing, reaching, sign, sound, or word.
Repeat the word after they choose.

Example

Adult: "Blue socks or orange socks?"
child points
Adult: "Orange socks! Socks on."

STRATEGY 3

Narrate, do not quiz

Talk about what is happening in real time.



Self-talk

Say what YOU are doing.

"I am pouring."
"I found the cup."

Parallel-talk

Say what YOUR CHILD is doing.

"You are pushing."
"Block up!"

Use the 3-to-1 rule

For every question, try 3 comments. This keeps communication relaxed instead of test-like.

STRATEGY 4

Use verbal routines

Repeat the same playful words during routines your child already knows.



Make it predictable

Say the same short phrase each time. After your child knows the routine, pause before the last word.

Examples

"Ready, set... go!"
"Wash, wash, wash hands."
"Shoes on, shoes on."
"Clean up, clean up."

STRATEGY 5

Repeat + add one

Model language one small step above what your child says or shows.



If your child says...	You can model...
"Car!"	"Red car." "Car go." "More car."

Keep it natural

You do not need to make your child repeat it. Hearing the model during a meaningful moment is the practice.

STRATEGY 6

Create a reason to communicate

Use everyday activities to help your child request or share.



To request

Put a favorite item in sight but slightly out of reach. Pause. Accept any attempt: reach, point, sign, sound, or word. Then, model a target word like “want” or “help” and give it.

To share

Do something fun or unexpected. Pause to see if your child looks, smiles, points, vocalizes, or imitates you. If they do, repeat repeat repeat!

Words to try: “help” “want” “more” or “please”

STRATEGY 7

Teach one small step

For harder routines, shrink the task and use only the help your child needs.



1

Pick one routine

Snack, clean-up, dressing, bath, book, or bedtime.

2

Pick one small step

Example: “cup on table” - not "let’s set the whole table."

3

Help less over time

Show and say first. Add a little physical help only if needed.

Praise trying: "You did it!" "Nice helping!" "That was hard and you tried."

USE THIS WEEK

Your 5-minute practice plan

Choose one strategy. Use it in one routine. Repeat for one week.

My routine:

Snack | Dressing | Bath

Books | Play | Clean-up

Strategy I will try:



Source note

World Health Organization. (2022). Caregiver skills training for families of children with developmental delays or disabilities: Participants' guide, group sessions 1–9. World Health Organization.