

Take Time. Talk!

Giving Children the
Words they Need



Child360 One focus.
Every angle.

It's never too early to talk to your children!

The first five years are critical to children's development as their brains triple in size during that time. Research has also shown that young children who have genuine and meaningful conversations develop larger vocabularies. All of these factors are strong predictors for their long-term school success.

Consider talking through your daily routines and activities when your children are infants. As they get older and their language develops, ask open-ended questions which give them the opportunity to respond using more than one-word responses. You will strengthen your relationship with your children while supporting their communication skills and academic success.



At the Grocery Store

Engage your children in the experience of grocery shopping. While walking around the store, find opportunities to initiate conversation about what they see.

 = Infants and Toddlers: 0-3 yrs

 = Preschool: 3-5 yrs

We're going to pick out some vegetables for the salad we'll make for dinner.

I see you pointing at the strawberries.
Let's buy more so we can have them with lunch.

We picked out the chicken we need for dinner. Now we're going to find the rice, and then the vegetables.

What is your favorite vegetable?
Tell me why it is your favorite.

What does it smell/taste like?

Tell me all the kinds of food you think we'd find in the freezer section.



During Mealtimes

Engage your children in the experience of grocery shopping. While walking around the store, find opportunities to initiate conversation about what they see.

 = Infants and Toddlers: 0-3 yrs

 = Preschool: 3-5 yrs

Can you think of other vegetables that are green?

How many plates will we need to have dessert?

What was your favorite thing you did at school today? Why?

I hear you crying and I know you're hungry. Let's cuddle and I will feed you right now.

I'm putting some applesauce on the spoon. I can see you're very excited for another bite.

We're all done eating, so I'm going to carry our dishes to the sink, and then I'm going to wash them.



During Bathtime

Bath time is a great place to complete a daily routine and have fun or silly conversations!

 = Infants and Toddlers: 0-3 yrs

 = Preschool: 3-5 yrs

I'm washing your hair. The bubbles are all over, and you're getting nice and clean.
I see you reaching for the bath sponge. What happens when we squeeze it? Let's try.
Time to rinse off. I'm going to fill the cup with water. Now I'll wash off your arms.

If you lived in the ocean, what animal would you be? Why?

Do you think the rubber duck will sink or float? Tell me why you think that.

Can you name some animals that swim? What is the same about them? What is different?



Reading at Bedtime

Have your children select a book you'll read together. While reading the story, ask your children questions to predict what they think will happen.

 = Infants and Toddlers: 0-3 yrs

 = Preschool: 3-5 yrs

I'm picking out a book. Now we're going to sit and we'll read it together.

Where should we sit to read our book?

Do you see a bear? Can you show me? You found the big, brown, furry bear.

What other ending to the story can you come up with?

What could _____ have done instead?

Did that ever happen to you? Tell me more about that.



Extra tips for talking to your children

For Infants & Toddlers

- Respond to your children's attempts to communicate (gestures, coos, babbles) by adding words to what your children are expressing.
- When communicating with your children, adapt your speech using a slower pace, clear pronunciation, repetition, simple words and sentences.
- Provide a rich language experience by using playful language (songs, rhyming games, novel sounds).

Responding to Your Children

- Be patient and give children extra time to respond (5 to 10 seconds).
- Allow your children time to fully answer a question without interruption.
- Show your children that you are interested in their answers.
- Continue to have back-and-forth conversation over several turns. Expand on what your children say by asking them more questions.

Praise & Affirmation

Provide specific praise and meaningful feedback to your children's response or comments instead of saying "good job". The following are examples of specific praise:

- That's a great question.
- You are full of good ideas.
- Thank you for sharing.
- I see you are working so hard.
- You are a great helper.
I couldn't have done it without you.

Other Opportunities for Conversation

- At the playground
- In the garden
- In the car / on the bus or train

Take Time. Talk!

Over the last 10 years, Child360 has improved the quality of preschool programs by providing funding, advancing teacher training and creating safe and nurturing environments for more than 100,000 children throughout Los Angeles County.

In June 2014, Child360 created "Take Time. Talk!" as a Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America commitment. Our pledge is to help strengthen the vocabulary skills of all young children in our country by providing parents and caretakers with powerful tools to help their children build exceptional language skills. Established by President Clinton, Secretary Hillary Clinton, and Chelsea Clinton, CGI America focuses on finding solutions that promote economic recovery in the United States.

Parents, if you read, sing and talk with your children by using open-ended questions that encourage them to think creatively and critically, you will give them the foundational language and thinking skills they need to succeed in school and life!

For more information, please visit:

ClintonFoundation.org/Clinton-Global-Initiative



Child360.org



Project Advisors: Dr. Anne Fernald, Stanford University,
and Dr. Dana Suskind, University of Chicago