

# QUICK IDEAS TO BUILD LANGUAGE

## Language In = Language Out

Cueing builds language and an internal understanding of a spoken language. So when we cue to our children, we are providing the building blocks for language, communication and ultimately literacy.

Building language in babies and toddlers who are deaf and hard of hearing is as simple as just cueing, the same way a parent would develop language in a hearing child. Still, there are some guidelines that provide an outline for parents in need of more specifics.

It's very important that parents don't 'dumb down' their language. Consistently talking and cueing to your child will build language. The more language a child acquires, the stronger the foundation for literacy.

## **REMEMBER: LANGUAGE IN = LANGUAGE OUT**

### **FOR BABIES**

- ❖ Think of your home as a laboratory of learning and use it.
- ❖ Avoid baby language. A pacifier is a pacifier, not a ba-ba or a bo-bo or a paci.
- ❖ Cue babble or whatever your child says – cueing it back reinforces what they are saying and tells them that you acknowledge them.
- ❖ Talk about how things are the same or different
- ❖ Talk about emotions and how things feel. If your child is angry or sad or happy, give him or her adjectives to describe those feelings.
- ❖ Sing and cue the alphabet.
- ❖ Use prepositions & opposites – on, off, under, over, near, far, next to, in, out, etc.
- ❖ Talk and cue about what you are doing – washing dishes, loading the dishwasher, cooking, brushing your teeth, taking a bath, etc.
- ❖ Use adjectives – the dog's tail is bushy, thin, thick, long, short. A pattern is plaid, or striped or solid colored. He is wearing a flowery shirt.

### **MORE IDEAS**

### **PRESCHOOL**

- ❖ Say and Cue body parts, farm animals and zoo animals.
- ❖ Count objects and use numbers
- ❖ Use and expect language and you will get language. Cue all the time and be consistent in your expectations.
- ❖ Cue sounds in the environment, especially with cochlear implant children because it validates what they hear. As language builds, expect expressive speech, especially with questions. Remember to cue colors – not just red, blue and yellow, but magenta, purple, lavender and turquoise.
- ❖ Use the names of the shapes of objects – triangles, squares, polygons, ovals
- ❖ Talk about how things smell and their texture – soft, hard, sandy, rough, smooth.
- ❖ Use brand names – Cheerios, Pampers, or Oshkosh overalls
- ❖ Use names of toys and characters, like Dora the Explorer, Jake and the Neverland Pirates
- ❖ Sing and cue nursery rhymes with your child.
- ❖ Identify items in the room and cue their names to your child. Describe them. For example, "We have a navy blue sofa." or "The picture on the wall has golden flowers."
- ❖ Listen to hearing children talk among themselves. Listen for phrases you wouldn't normally say and work them into the vocabulary you use with your child.
- ❖ Take field trips and use experiences to build language. For example, say and cue the names of animals and their habitats during a visit to the zoo.

*(Written by Sarina Roffé, 2016)*