




CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

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Why is it important?




-  Children improve their communication by having all their attempts rewarded but also by giving them a model of a better way to get what they want.
-  You can offer them an easy way to communicate to get things quickly.
-  Always praise any communication, saying what your child has done, eg 'good asking', 'good showing', 'good talking'.
-  Your child's communication will be helped by everybody using the same single word to name things, eg a drink is always 'juice', not sometimes 'drink', sometimes 'bottle' etc.

Remember: **Motivation**
More Opportunities
Make it easy

-  It is really easy to anticipate your child's needs all the time, but try to give them lots of opportunities throughout the day to make requests, ask for help and make choices.

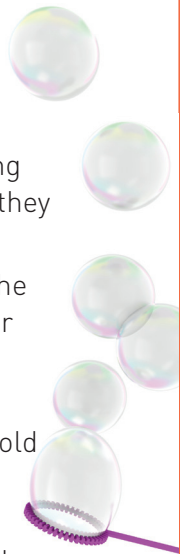


How?

-  Create opportunities for your child to request by giving toys, snacks and activities a bit at a time, and by keeping items out of reach but in view so that they have to request these to carry on eg:
 - Bubbles – stop after you have blown the bubbles, look at your child and wait for them to indicate more.
 - Snack – give them a small amount of snack eg fruit crisps in a bowl, then hold the rest back and wait for them to request **more** from you.
-  Create opportunities for the child to ask for help by putting favourite activities/ items or items needed for activities in a clear box. Your child then needs to ask for **help** to **open the box**. Alternatively, provide activities which require adult support to initiate/continue (**more**) eg have favourite toys/activities in view but out of reach.
-  Give choices wherever possible, rather than giving the child the item they normally choose. Create opportunities to make choices, even if you know one of the choices is something they don't like. Hold each item forward as you label it eg '**juice or milk?**' You could also try offering two types of snack, two different books, two different colour cars.

Always accept their message of passing you an object or pointing to the object, vocalising etc., but show them the next way of asking by modelling one word, eg 'open', 'blow', 'bubbles', 'more'. If they use one word, model two eg child says 'more', adult says, 'more bubbles'.

We want to make the communication as easy and as rewarding as possible!



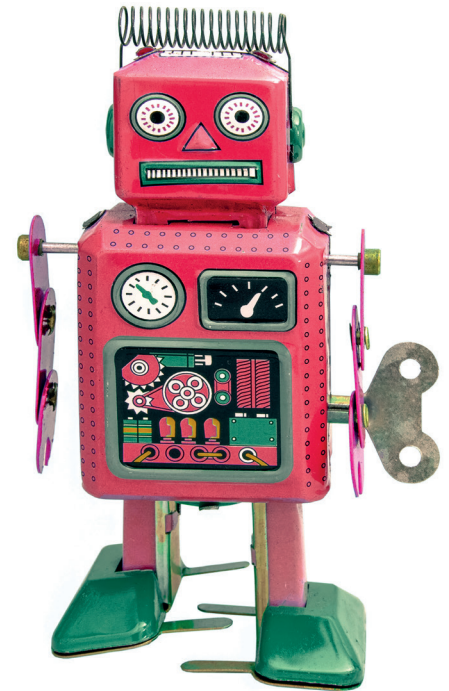


Other Activities to Try

Once your child is looking and reaching for things, they need to learn to give you a deliberate message. Passing you an object because they need some help teaches them to communicate directly with you.

Ideas to help your child learn to give you things to communicate:

- 🚩 Give them a packet of snack without opening it and hold your hand out for them to pass it back to be opened.
- 🚩 Blow up a balloon and let it go, wait for them to show you they want it again and hold your hand out for them to give it to you.
- 🚩 Blow bubbles, put the lid on the bottle and put it on the floor. Hold your hand out and wait for them to hand it back to be opened.
- 🚩 Wind up a simple clockwork toy, wait for it to run down, then hold your hand out for them to pass it to you for more.
- 🚩 Once you have played with a favourite toy or they have had some of their favourite food, put some more in a see through container with a lid. Hold your hand out and wait for them to pass it to you to open it.
- 🚩 Begin a tickle game/squeeze game, stop and lift your hand away, then wait for your child to pull your hand back down.
- 🚩 Leave your child's empty cup out, look for signs that they want a drink, hold your hand out near the cup for them to hand it to you.



When you are supporting your child to practise giving these messages, there may be several steps. Initially, you may need to help your child by being close at hand and holding your hand out as soon as you can see them getting frustrated. Sometimes your child may need someone else to put the object in your hand. To help your child develop more advanced communication, you could gradually move further away, or into another room, to see if they will come and find you and to teach them to travel to give a message.

Offer choices:

eg *'more or finished?'*
for different activities.