Your child's language

Children lay the foundation of their language during their first three years of life. They begin to develop their language long before they can speak. As a parent, you therefore play a unique role.

Talk, sing, laugh and read with your child! Use your mother tongue. A child can learn many languages at the same time.

Bokstart (Bookstart) is a national initiative aimed at parents and adults who spend time close to young children (ages 0–3). The aim is to stimulate language development at an early age.
bokstart.se

Bokstart

Material from the Swedish Arts Council for promoting reading

It starts with language

Why is it important to stimulate a child's language development? Because language lays the groundwork for all learning. Language also strengthens your relationship with your child.

Playfully draw out language

Before children learn to use words to speak, they talk in other ways, such as by making sounds, pointing and listening. Imitate the child's sounds, reply using words, or with a funny facial expression.

Talk about what you are doing

Talk about things that you do together, such as having a bath or shopping for food. In this way, the child is already directing its attention to what you are describing, and it will be much easier for it to learn new words.

Give the child new words

Repeat what the child says and add a few words. If the child says, "Look, house!", you might reply, "Yes, look! What a big yellow house!" Use new words in different contexts. You could say, "Now we're going to tidy up. Tidy up the toys! Look, Daddy's tidying up! Can you help me tidy up?"

Exaggerate

It is good to exaggerate your body language, facial expressions and emphasised words. This will make it easier for the child to understand. You can use your hands to show how big something is, or you could act like you are freezing when something is cold. Try to emphasise words that are important and new. For example, "Can you see the lamp?"

Ask questions

Use different types of question. You could ask questions like, "Where is the window?" The child can then reply by pointing. If the child doesn't respond, you can answer the question yourself – you will then be demonstrating how the words can be used.

Say "I wonder"

Instead of asking, "What is the horse going to do?", you could say, "I wonder if the horse is hungry." This will make the question feel more open, and you may get the child to say more.



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