

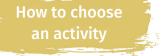
It's "OWL" About Having Fun!

Promoting Your Child's Language Learning through Fun Interactions

Did you know that having fun is an essential part of your child's language learning?

Research shows that children learn language best while having extended, enjoyable interactions with their parents or caregivers. But what exactly makes an interaction fun for your child? And what can you do to keep that fun going to give your child the best opportunities to communicate and build their language skills?







Think of something your child enjoys doing

Remember to think outside the toy box! What your child is interested in might surprise you. Perhaps they like hiding in a laundry basket, pulling tissues from a box or pushing a roll of tape across the floor. You can create a fun interaction based on anything your child is interested in.

Avoid activities that might distract from interaction

Toys, games, and electronic books that "do all the work" with flashing lights, loud noises, or pre-recorded songs may make it harder to have a back-and-forth interaction.



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Imagine your child loves playing in the sand. You head to the playground or to the beach and...

Get face-to-face Get down to your child's level so you are close together and can see each other's faces.

then...

Observe Watch your child silently and pay close attention to what they say or do. This will tell you what

they're interested in. Do they like pouring water on the sand, making a big pile, or digging a hole?

When you wait quietly without telling your child what to do, you give them an opportunity to Wait

explore and experiment, which will help you pinpoint what they are most interested in doing. You

also give them a chance to start the interaction and "tell" you something.

Pay attention to what your child says, without interrupting. This lets your child know that you are Listen

present and focused on them, and that what they are communicating is important to you.

Next...Follow Your Child's Lead!



When you Observe, Wait and Listen™, you may discover your child's favorite part of the activity – the part they find most fun! They may also start the interaction and communicate with you about this activity. You can use this as a jumping off point to Follow Your Child's Lead. For example, if your child really likes patting down the sand on a "mountain", you can:

Copy what your child is doing - Gather some sand and make your own mountain, patting it down the same way your child does. This is likely to get their attention, and they may laugh, smile or make a comment.

Respond with interest to what your child communicates - If your child points to the sand mountain and makes a sound as they are building it, you can use an enthusiastic voice and say, "Wow, you're making a big mountain!"

Build playfully on what your child says or does - You can add an idea like "I wonder how big we can make our mountains" and make yours bigger. Or, perhaps you can make a little hole at the top of yours and put a stick in it and say, "Look, my mountain has a tree on top!" From here, a conversation could really take off!

When you OWL™ and Follow Your Child's Lead, you set the stage for fun interactions that you'll both want to keep going creating many opportunities for your child to learn from you and take turns using their language skills.







