

Getting Ready for School

Talking with Your Child Every Day

Good communication skills are important for your child to be able to express what she or he needs, wants, thinks and feels. Talking with your child in any language helps your child develop good speaking, listening, and early literacy skills. It also strengthens your parent-child relationship.

Why is this important for school readiness?

Research shows that talking with (not just to) your child creates measurable changes in the brain and sets the stage for strong literacy skills in school. These interactions are even more important than the number of words your child hears.

Talking with your child can help your child learn to listen to others and take turns in conversations

A language rich environment at home is important for your child's language development. A language rich environment is one where family members frequently talk, read or sing with the child in English and/or a family's home language.

The more words children hear and know helps them understand conversations and understand books. By third grade, children who know more words and have bigger vocabularies tend to become stronger readers.

"Private speech" is the kind of talking children (and adults) do when they talk to themselves. Private speech is an important part of preschoolers' language development. It helps them practice unfamiliar kinds of language, reinforces ideas they are trying to remember, and helps them with problem-solving and self-control.

What can families do to help?

Set aside time to converse with your child about something that interests him or her. Sit with your child and make eye contact.

When conversing with your

Activities to do with your preschooler:

Help develop your child's listening-comprehension skills: *Play "Simon Says" or "Mother, May I"*

Increase your child's vocabulary: *Play the "vo L)0Á 61G 6SX%5...,SX &B)d L 06.1i6(othe)4 (r) Tm <00*

Resources used for this tip sheet:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2008). Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Development

Center for Early Literacy Learning (2012-2016). Practice Guides to Use with Parents: Talking and Listening

Walsh, B. (2018) The Brain-