

ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE

Commercial Games:

- ❖ “Scrabble” and “Scrabble Jr.” (word meaning, phonics)
- ❖ “Mad Libs” (parts of speech and vocabulary)
- ❖ “Boggle” (vocabulary and spelling)
- ❖ “Password” (synonyms)
- ❖ “Word Power” (antonyms and synonyms)
- ❖ “\$20,000 Pyramid” (categorizing)
- ❖ Crossword puzzle books (vocabulary and spelling)
- ❖ “Scattergories” (categories)
- ❖ Taboo (vocabulary, especially adjectives)
- ❖ Catch Phrase (vocabulary, describing)
- ❖ “Pictionary” (vocabulary)
- ❖ “Guess it” (describing)
- ❖ “Outburst” (categories)

Car Trip Tips:

- ❖ Have child name all things he can immediately see, in a 2-minute time period.
- ❖ Name a function and child names the item. (Ex. – What pounds nails?)
- ❖ Name an item and have them say something that goes with it. (Ex: What goes with a baseball? Answer: mitt or bat).
- ❖ Name a category or sound and have children name items that go in the category. See how many items they come up with.
- ❖ Play a guessing game, such as “I’m thinking of something that is (round).” Continue giving clues until the item is guessed.
- ❖ Make kids more than passengers. Children love to get involved. When the inevitable “How much longer?” gets asked, don’t just say “soon.” Show them the map, explain where you are, and point out the roads to be taken. You could appoint a navigator; give him or her a special hat or badge.
- ❖ Bring a tape recorder with pre-recorded tapes and blank cassettes. Kids love to listen to themselves talk or sing on tape. Older children can interview people they meet on the trip.
- ❖ Do a language activity. Tell the child they are going to become a word detective. Pick a category such as: food, sports, jobs, holidays, T.V. programs, vehicles etc.. Next give the child clues until he or she guesses the correct item.
- ❖ Do “whole-part” relationships. Name the parts of an item and have your child guess the whole. For example, name the parts of a bird: claw, beak, feather. Your child should be able to guess that it is a bird.

Humor

A person's ability to laugh, to make others laugh, and to see the humor in everyday situations is an important language life skill. Recent studies have shown that a sense of humor promotes good emotional and physical health. Laughing and joking and being just plain silly are some of the best things about being a child – or a parent.

The development of language skills enhances a sense of humor. Children are most amused by jokes that are based on topics or concepts that they have just recently come to understand. The ability to receive clues, which make a statement funny, is largely determined by a child's age and verbal skills. Understanding a joke is a form of verbal problem solving; something has to "click". Humor is often based on multiple meanings.

Help make humor a part of your child's life. Encourage your child's expression of humor. Also help him/her to recognize and to use the puns, multiple-meaning words and idioms in structured jokes.

Examples: Questions

Answers

- | | |
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| 1. What is a ghost's favorite food? | Spookghetti |
| 2. Where do cows go for fun? | Mooovies |
| 3. What is the easiest way to count cows? | Cowculator |
| 4. What lives in the ocean, has 8 legs and is quick on the draw? | Billy the Squid |
| 5. Why did the farmer name his pig, "Ink"? | It kept running out of the pen. |
| 6. What is gray and has a trunk? | A mouse on vacation |
| 7. What has 4 wheels and flies? | A garbage truck |
| 8. What should you do if you break your toe? | Call the tow truck |
| 9. Why did the man climb to the top of the restaurant? | The waiter said the meal was on the house. |
| 10. What do you get when you cross a parrot with a shark? | An animal that talks your ear off. |
| 11. Why did the boy throw the clock out the window? | To see if time flies |
| 12. Why did the bank robber saw the legs off the bed? | He wanted to lie low for a while. |

Vocabulary Jeopardy

Enjoyed by grades 3 –6 may be best used with vocabulary from reading materials.

1. Vocabulary words are written on 3 * 5 index cards, and each word is given the same point value.
2. Class is divided into 2 teams. If your class is too large to facilitate each student's participation, you may choose to divide the class into 4 or 6 teams playing each other. You must provide each pair of teams a set of vocabulary on 3 * 5 index cards.
3. The teacher or other assigned individual not playing on a team will officiate by having a copy of vocabulary definitions.
4. Each team takes turns reading a vocabulary word to the other and each team takes a turn giving a definition.
5. Point scores are kept on a blackboard or paper.
6. If the team giving the definition fails to give the correct definition, the other team may answer and if correct, they will be given .5 point value.

Story Openers

Give an opening line to a story and let your child finish the rest. You can use this to listen for a given sound. You can write the story down as he tells it and underline all the sounds he or she is working on. Practice the story then have your child recite it to family members or friends.

Here are some examples:

1. My uncle gave me a ride in his spaceship and _____.
2. One day as I was walking down the street, a man gave me a million dollars and _____.
3. Once I was in a shipwreck. I swam to a deserted island and _____.
4. One Christmas I received a magic carpet. I hopped on and _____.
5. As I was running through the woods one day, I fell in gigantic hole. All of a sudden, I found myself in another world and _____.
6. One night there was a big thunderstorm. I was all alone when the lights went out. I heard a noise and _____.
7. One day I fell asleep and stayed asleep for fifty years. When I woke up _____.
8. Last year in my hometown there was a celebration just for me because I _____.
9. Yesterday, I found a new friend. He was not like my usual friends because he was _____.
10. I dreamed I was the King/Queen of England and I _____.

Be creative! Think up some of your own.

Demonstrations

Let your child demonstrate something, he knows how to do. Have them tell what they are doing as they are doing it. You can use this to practice speech sounds. Let him/her present it to family or others.

Here are some examples:

1. How to make chocolate chip cookies.
2. How to ride a bike.
3. How to build a campfire.
4. How to clean your room.
5. How to play a specific game.
6. How to make a sandwich.
7. How to make a puppet.
8. How to swim.
9. How to do a magic trick.
10. How to make a telephone call.
11. How to make a pizza.

Rodeo

The purpose for these activities is to teach students to think of descriptive phrases about a current topic.

Divide into two teams and take turns adding to lists of descriptive phrases on the chalkboard. The team with the most phrases wins.

E.g.

Team One

Team Two

Topic:
A Rodeo

Twisting horses
Brave clowns
Falling hats
Etc.

Dusty arenas
Flying ropes
Shiny spurs
Etc.

Pick a topic, which would be appropriate for the vocabulary and skill level of your grade.

This could be incorporated with units in Social Studies, Geography, History, Science, Etc.