

Q&A

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF YOUR INFANT AND TODDLER.



For Parents



How can I stimulate my baby's early language development and communication skills?

Ever felt 'lost' when watching a foreign movie without subtitles? Young children are faced with similar feelings. They hear constant streams of sounds, and need to figure out how words combine and what the words relate to — all by themselves. But as it turns out, babies are quite adept at discovering language.

Here's what you can do to stimulate your child's language development:

Tip #1 Talk to your child as often as you can

Put aside your digital devices and engage your little one in language activities. These can range from describing scenarios while grocery shopping, to reading a book aloud to him. Even if the baby still cannot understand what you are saying, he will respond to your voice, tone and gestures.



Tip #2 Use language in its full complexity

There is no need to simplify 'baby talk' too much, as your child can pick up the richness of language implicitly and spontaneously. Reduce directives such as "Do this" or "Don't do that". These are short, repetitive and tend to end a conversation.

Tip #3 Ask open-ended questions

Engage in question-answering activities that challenge the child to understand new words or phrases, and to communicate actively with you. Be positive and encouraging as you interact with your child.



How can I support the different needs of toddlers and optimise their learning and developmental outcomes?

A child's development reaches a 'transition point' at about 15 to 18 months. At this stage, he begins to have a significant growth or spurt in his overall development, resulting in an increased sense of confidence and independence.

As early childhood educators, we need to make time to understand how a child learns and develops. You can then create relevant experiences and activities to nurture him into a confident and active learner.

Here are two strategies to support the different learning needs of each child:

► **Build a trusting and trustworthy relationship** with families through open and regular communication. Drop-off and pick-up times are great touch points to engage families about their children, and so are simple documentation with photos and short descriptions of the child's activities and experiences.

► **Provide sufficient materials with age-appropriate activities and experiences** to enable toddlers to move from one activity to another, and for them to engage freely with their peers and adults within the space. Creating opportunities for toddlers to have choices — when done in a respectful, reciprocal and responsive environment — will ensure that children develop autonomy, self-confidence and even decision-making skills.

For Educators



ASK THE EXPERTS



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