

TOP TEN STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Receptive language is your child's ability to understand words, directions, and messages. Strong understanding develops before talking and is built through everyday interactions, play, and routines. You don't need to use every strategy at once. Choose 2-3 strategies to focus on during daily activities and build from there.

1

Get Your Child's Attention First

Move to your child's level. Say their name and wait for eye contact or a pause. Reduce distractions before giving directions.

2

Keep Language Simple

Use short, clear phrases. Avoid complex sentences. For example, say "Get shoes" instead of "Can you get your shoes so we can leave?" Repeat directions when needed.

3

Start with One-Step Directions

Start with one-step directions with gestural cues, then move on to two-step directions using first, then language.

4

Follow Your Child's Lead

Talk about what your child is already doing. Match language to their interests.

5

Use Daily Routines for Practice

Repeat the same directions during predictable routines. Example: "Throw it away" after meals or "Time for bath" each night.

6

Highlight and Repeat Key Words

Choose a few important words to repeat often. Core words like go, more, open, help, up, and stop work across many routines.

7

Pair Words With Actions and Visuals

Model or act out what you want your child to do. Use gestures, objects, pictures, or low-tech AAC to support understanding.

8

Pause and Give Time to Process

After giving a direction, pause and wait. Watch for responses like looking, reaching, or moving.

9

Build Understanding of Concepts

Use play and routines to model concepts like big/little, in/on, and before/after again and again.

10

Practice Understanding Through Play and Stories

Ask simple questions during shared reading or play, like "Who?" or "What happened?". If your child isn't sure, model the answer.