



## Activities to Encourage Speech and Language Development 4–6 Years



- When your child starts a conversation, give your full attention whenever possible. Make sure you have your child's attention before you speak.
- Acknowledge, encourage and praise all attempts to speak. Show that you understand the word or phrase by fulfilling the request, if appropriate.
- Pause after speaking. This pause gives your child a chance to continue the conversation.
- Continue to build vocabulary. Introduce a new word and offer its definition, or use it in a context that your child can easily understand. You may do it in an exaggerated, humorous manner. *"I think I will drive the vehicle to the store. I am too tired to walk."*
- Talk about spatial relationships (first, middle and last; right and left) and opposites (up and down; on and off).
- Offer a description or clues, and have your child identify what you are describing: *"We use it to sweep the floor" (a broom). "It is cold, sweet and good for dessert. I like strawberry" (ice cream).*
- Work on forming and explaining categories. Identify the thing that does not belong in a group of similar objects: *"A shoe does not belong with an apple and an orange because you can't eat it; it is not round; it is not a fruit."*
- Help your child follow two-and-three-step directions: *"Go to your room and bring me your book."* Encourage your child to give directions. Follow their directions as they explain how to build a tower of blocks.
- Play games with your child, such as "house." Exchange roles in the family, with you pretending to be the child. Talk about the different rooms and furnishings in the house.
- The television also can serve as a valuable tool. Talk about what they are watching. Have your child guess what might happen next. Talk about the characters. Are they happy or sad? Ask your child to tell you what has happened in the story. Act out a scene together, and make up a different ending.
- Take advantage of daily activities. For example, while in the kitchen, encourage your child to name the utensils needed. Discuss the foods on the menu, and talk about their color, texture and taste. *"Where does the food come from? Which foods do you like? Which do you dislike? Who will clean up?"* Emphasize the use of prepositions by asking your child to put the napkin on the table, in your lap or under the spoon. Identify whom the napkin belongs to: *"It is my napkin." "It is Daddy's." "It is John's."*
- While shopping for groceries, discuss what you will buy, how many you need and what you will make. Discuss the size (large or small), shape (long, round, square) and weight (heavy or light) of the packages.

