

Responsive Language



Observe, Wait, Listen

Then...

Imitate

Interpret

Narrate, or

Join in the Play

Responsive Language—the details...

Observe, Wait, Listen—notice where your child’s interest is focused, wait for them to look to you for a response.

Then, follow the child’s lead:

- ◆ **Imitate**—copy what they say or do
- ◆ **Interpret**—say what they would say if they had the words
- ◆ **Comment**—use words to narrate what they are doing, or
- ◆ **Join in the Play**—and use playful words to accompany what you’re both doing “uh-oh”, “boom”, “whoa, look at that!”

Examples: The child says “ba”—you say “Ball. You have a green ball.” The child looks at you with a questioning expression—you say “you are wondering if you can go on the slide. Yes, you can go on the slide.” The child reaches for the button on the jack-in-the-box—you say “You see the button. What will happen if you press the button? Oh! Peek-a-boo! Can I try?”

Why try this? By tuning in to where their attention is focused, you give them meaningful words that are relevant to their experience *in the moment*. Children learn more words, speak at a younger age, and understand more quickly when parents use responsive language.

Learn more: <http://www.hanen.org/SiteAssets/Helpful-Info/Articles/the-responding-game-an-essential-skill-for-parents.aspx>

Or <https://gooddayswithkids.com/2019/01/25/teaching-language-is-not-just-about-saying-more-words/>