

THE CITY SPEAKS

A PARENT NEWSLETTER BY DISTRICT 75 SPEECH-LANGUAGE PROVIDERS

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"Communication at Home for the Holidays"

What is Communication?

How does your child communicate?

There are many ways our children express their needs and wants. These include:

- Speaking
- Writing
- Body language, facial expressions and looking or eye-gaze at desired objects
- Pointing
- Common system of signs, gestures, photographs, picture symbols and pictures

Why is Communication Important?

When your child communicates his needs and wants he is participating in a social interaction. This establishes a relationship with others which leads to decreased frustration and increased self-esteem. This will have a positive impact on your child's ability to learn at home and in school. Communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, demonstrates having interest in other people. It encourages others to want to interact with you too.

How Do You Make Communication Interactive?

Here are some suggested activities that you can do with your child:

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Playing Games</u></p> <p>Suggestions for games to play with your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legos Checkers • Connect 4 Scrabble Jr. • Candy Land Upwards • Trouble Boggle • Don't Spill the Beans Sorry • Go Fish, War, Uno Memory • Taboo Guess Who? <p>Provide opportunities for communication while playing a game by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicating a turn using words, gestures or pictures. • Asking and answering questions. • Withholding a game piece so the child needs to request using words, gestures or pictures • Having child teach rules of the game to you, a sibling or a friend. | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Going to the Store</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a shopping list with your child using written words or pictures you can cut out from packaging, ads, internet images or a store circular. • Work on money skills by identifying coins, the value of each coin and counting money. Your child can also determine the correct amount of change he should receive, if he has enough money to pay for his items and give the appropriate amount of money for the purchase. • Encourage appropriate social skills while at the store. This can include waiting on line, making choices, greetings, saying thank you, asking for help to find an item, reach for an item on a high shelf or for the price of an item. • Talk about what will happen, what is happening and what happened in the store using words or pictures. • Let your child load items onto the conveyor belt, scan the items and/or bag the items. This activity teaches daily life skills and provides something active to do while in the store. |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Preparing Dinner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the child find the ingredients in a recipe using words or pictures. • Have the child be involved in the making of the dinner by pouring, mixing, cracking eggs, spreading, opening and closing packages. • Have the child set the table. This encourages the child to identify utensils, sort, label, and follow directions. <p><i>Always use praise "good job" or "good trying" during the activity. It will take time to master all the parts of the task.</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Eating Dinner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model requesting using words, phrases, pictures, symbols or gestures to pass different dinner items. • Have a conversation about the day's activities. • Keep the food items out of reach in order for your child to initiate requests by pointing to the desired item, exchanging pictures or using a communication board. • Encourage the child to help clear the table. Provide 1-3 step directions to put the dirty dishes in the sink, throw the garbage away, put items back in refrigerator or cabinets. Some children may need hand-over-hand assistance, visual or gestural supports. |



Joke Time

Jokes are a fun way to practice language skills. Jokes provide a script for children with limited language as well as opportunities to interact with their peers, practice figurative language, support language processing and the development of vocabulary, retention and recall skills.

For non-speaking individuals, voice output communication devices can be programmed with jokes.



Q: What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
A: Frosted Flakes



Q: What kind of bird can write?
A: A PENguin.

Knock, knock,
Who's there?
Lettuce.
Lettuce who?
Lettuce in!! (Let us in!!)

Dear CITY SPEAKS,

My son is 10 years old and he has difficulty interacting with friends, family and people in the community. When others are speaking he interrupts, he has difficulty staying on topic, maintaining conversation and taking turns. He is going into middle school next year and I am concerned he will have difficulty making new friends. What should I do?

Signed,
"Concerned"

Dear "Concerned",

Communication skills are key in building and maintaining relationships. Many children are unaware or have difficulty interacting in various social situations, which may include playing games or simply engaging in a conversation about topics of interest. There are a variety of materials available as well as activities you can do to improve your child's conversational skills.

Social stories are one example that demonstrates appropriate behaviors in real life situations, such as working as part of a group, making mistakes and interrupting a conversation appropriately.

When he interrupts, have him wait for his turn, and then have him say, "Excuse me" and state what he wants to say. If he talks about something different than what everyone else is talking about, remind him what everyone else is talking about, and try to have him add something to the conversation.

The websites www.graycenter.org and www.sand-box-learning.com are two sources you can use to find or create a social story. You can also talk to your child's speech therapist to have him/her write a personalized social story for your child.

Stay Healthy During the Holiday Season.

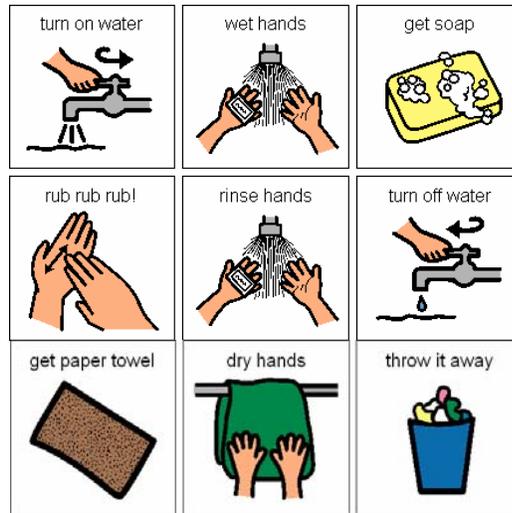
Cover your cough and wash your hands!

To prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus and other infections:



- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or the inside of your elbow – not your hand.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner. * Note – water alone does not kill germs.
- Don't get too close to people who are sick. Maintain a distance of 3 feet. If you get sick yourself, avoid close contact with other people.
- For more information please visit www.nyc.gov/flu.

Communication Board: Hand Washing



If you have any questions or topics that you would like to address, please contact your child's speech provider or send an email to BMandel6@schools.nyc.gov.

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