

# LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PART 1

*5 easy ideas  
how to help oral motor skills*



## WORKING ON THE ORAL MOTOR SKILLS

Learning to talk is an especially important part of our lives. Every parent waits for that moment when the child says their first words. We jump with joy when we hear the first MAMA or DADA. Some kids develop that skill earlier some later and once your child can speak simple sentences before they are 2.5 years old there is nothing to worry about. Learning to talk its not only the matter of learning how to pronounce words. This is also the development of the oral motor skills.

Oral motor skills refer to the movements of the muscles in the mouth, jaw, tongue, lips, and cheeks. The strength, flexibility and coordination of those muscles are responsible for tasks such as feeding and talking.

We can help our children to develop those skills by doing very simple activities at home! Let's have a look at few easy ideas.

## Blowing Bubbles

Blowing bubbles gives children so much joy but it is also so beneficial! Playing with bubbles provides a sensory experience and encourages hand and eye coordination and the development of gross and fine motor skills. It is also a fantastic way of putting those oral motor skills into practice. If you don't have a bubble wand and bubble solution handy- try out our idea of making bubble snakes! I can guarantee you great excitement and loads of fun in your house!



Things you will need:  
a spare sock, a plastic bottle, sharp scissors, a bowl with a little bit of water and a washing up liquid



You cut the top of the bottle and put the sock on the wide part. Then you dip it in the water and washing up liquid mixture and you ask your child to blow hard to get a long bubble snake. Loads of fun guaranteed!!



## Picking objects with a straw

For this activity you will need a straw and some small light objects- like shapes cut out of paper.

You can set up different colours, papers and different coloured bowls/containers. You ask your child to pick up all the object by using the straw. They will have to suck the air to do this which will provide a great work our for the cheeks and the jaw. They will also need a good coordination skills

## Keep the feather up in the air

Very easy to set up activity that will bring a lot of fun! Give your child a feather and put the music on. Tell them that once the music in on, the feather should be up in the air and when the music stops it can fall. This activity develops not only the oral motor skills but also gross motor skills.



## Origami boat race

A good old origami boat, can easily transform into an oral motor skills practice tool! Just make few boats, put them to the bathtub or a basin full of water and ask your kids to blow the boats to see which one is faster.



For detailed instructions of all the activities check our youtube channel:

Really Cool Afterschool



# LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PART 2

*3 steps that every parent  
should do to encourage  
language development*



## Working on expanding your toddler's vocabulary

### Step 1

This may sound very silly but the first and most important rule to help your child to develop those language skills is simply talking. And I mean talking all the time. Sometimes we make that mistake because we assume that our child doesn't talk so therefore, they don't understand us. This just leads to a situation when the child is not exposed to enough language. We should talk to our children on daily basis, explaining the world to them. Use proper name of objects, avoid baby language such as bop bop. Woof woof etc. Use full sentences, speak clearly and name all the objects and describe them. For example, instead of saying: a dress, say a beautiful pink dress with flowers etc. use long descriptions of everything that your child can see, this way you will expand their vocabulary.



**SO, LET'S REFLECT  
ON THE WAY YOU SPEAK TO  
YOUR CHILD!  
USE THIS CHECKLIST:**

- AM I DESCRIBING THE WORLD TO MY TODDLER?
- AM I USING FULL SENTENCES?
- AM I USING PROPER LANGUAGE NOT BABY LANGUAGE?
- AM I USING DESCRIPTIVE WORDS TO EXPAND MY TODDLERS VOCABULARY?
- AM I TEACHING MY TODDLER NEW WORDS BY POINTING TO NEW THINGS?

**Don't worry if you  
didn't tick all the  
boxes!**

**It is never too  
late to start!**





## Step 2

Imitate sounds.

This is great for pre-language activities and you can start this as early as you want even during the baby stage when your child starts making sounds. Play sounds game at first you repeat the sounds that your baby is making and then let them repeat your sounds. Make them more complicated as they grow but make it fun. Make different faces, stick out your tongue, blow pretend bubbles- all of them activities, even though they may seem funny, they help to work on the oral motor skills. Another good idea is imitating animal sounds and vehicles sounds. Just don't forget tell your child the proper name of the animal or the vehicle. So, if your child sees a cat and says: meow, you can say: yes, this is a cat, it says meow.

## Step 3

Use books and flashcards

You should read to your child every day. Find 10 minutes during your daily schedule to read a book. The best time is before bed, but if your bedtime routine is different, you can use any time during the day to do that. It can be frustrating at first if your child doesn't show any interest and wants to hold the book and turn pages- this is ok and it is a normal stage of development. Just sit with a book and name what you see in it. You don't need to read a long story straight away. Some children will be able for it once others will have no interest at all, but it is important to get into the routine of reading. You can let your child hold the book, choose the hard books for the first stages that are not easy to rip and just sit together and you tell him what you see. Remember about describing things in detail, that way his vocabulary will expand faster. You will see when your child is ready for a proper story, but don't worry about it as long as you handle books together and talk about them is enough. Another great help for language development are flashcards. You can buy ready made flashcards or you can make some yourself on whatever subject you want. First you can place few flashcards on the floor and ask your child to give you a duck, a cow or whatever else is on the pictures. This way you will know if they understand. Play with the flashcards, look at them together, hide one and ask which one is missing, describe what you see etc



# LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PART 3

*3 STEPS TO SUCCESSFULLY  
EXPOSE YOUR CHILD TO  
LANGUAGE.*



**If we expose to something, we are more likely to absorb it faster! Here are 3 steps that you can do at home to expose your child to language for a better language acquisition.**

## STEP 1

### SURROUND YOURSELF WITH MUSIC

Do you know the feeling when you hear a song in the radio, and you cannot get it out of your head? This has a great power, doesn't it? It does! That is why it is a great idea to use that power to learn a language! It is easier to learn anything new if it has a melody! So, surround your child with music! Play children songs as well as a radio while you are doing things at home and use songs for transitions such as getting ready, cleaning up, going to bed, dinner time etc. You will find a great selection of transition songs on you tube.



## STEP 2

### READ AND MAKE UP POEMS

Any poems. When words rhyme, they are easier to remember. You can read poems together from children's books, but you could also make up some silly poems yourself such as: see you later alligator, give me a hug you little bug etc. Anything that rhymes and its fun, play some hand games with clapping and chanting words



## STEP 3

Choose age-appropriate cartoons that promote language development. If you allow your child to watch cartoons, make sure that the content is educational and helps your child to learn new words and sentence structure. Pay attention to the way the characters talk – the more they explain things the better, less action the better. Cartoons for this age group should be explaining how does the world work, should use nice and proper language and encourage your child to repeat words/sentences.

Another great resource is listening to stories. Some books come with an audio CD. They have loads of nice sound effects and songs that make a story more interesting. You can play a story while looking at the book or just play a story itself when your child is playing.



### REMEMBER

Too much screen is not good and can impact your child's development in a bad way! please check recommended times for screen time for different age groups as recommended by WHO

