



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **Talking to your child - language development
Part 1 (LOVE)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

Talking to your child – language development PART 1

Objectives

- Generate understanding of the importance of talking to children from birth and communicating with them often and positively
- Encourage regular reading aloud time with children
- Generate understanding of the value of learning in your mother tongue when young

Introduction

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child's life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent.

Talking to your child from birth is exposing your child to language whether they understand or not. Exposure to language from birth to age three – the more the better – is essential for later success at school! Talking to your child a lot before three is really important. Communication begins at birth and the sounds that babies make have a purpose and are meaningful. Children learn by listening and watching - so talk to your child, sing songs and rhymes, look at books together. It is critical that your child learns to speak in their mother tongue and receives numerous opportunities to read and learn in their mother tongue. Second language acquisition can occur simultaneously or later.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Today we are talking about language development in children. Can you tell me a bit about this?</i></p>	<p>Language is crucial to young children's development; it is the essential key for learning, for communicating and building relationships with others as well as for enabling children to make sense of the world around them. Children learn through interaction with people and objects in their environments. They begin by learning language and then use language to learn. Listening, understanding, reasoning and communicating all rely on language and are the building blocks of early literacy and mathematics learning. A parent's role in developing and encouraging language acquisition in children is therefore of the utmost importance.</p>

<p>2. <i>Does this need to happen early?</i></p>	<p>There is a widespread mistaken belief that learning begins at school. The truth is that from birth children should be learning vital skills and understanding that will help them to be successful later in life.</p>
<p>3. <i>Parents often amuse friends and family by relaying what their children say, yet how do children learn to make these amusing comments, how do they learn to communicate?</i></p>	<p>There have been several theories about how young children acquire language, but it is generally agreed that children acquire language through significant others by interaction in their immediate environment, through responding to sounds, sentences and experiences expressed by their parents, family and other carers. They begin by absorbing, listening and then imitating and practising. Their responses are reinforced by these significant others and patterns begin to emerge, even for the babies, as they try so hard to make sense of what is happening around them. Gradually they learn to reproduce sounds and words and establish an understanding of how language works, the structure and grammatical sense of putting these sounds and words together. Given minimum exposure to language, every child will acquire a sophisticated symbol system to serve its communicative needs. They gain an understanding about their own particular language and culture, but also knowledge and comprehension of the world around them. Some children will acquire more than one language, sometimes two or three at the same time, sometimes one after another. Each new experience, whether as children (or</p>

4. *Is language development important for other development?*

adults) extends language skills in some way.

Yes! Recent research highlights the importance of early language stimulation for brain development and later learning. Early pleasurable experiences, such as hearing the sounds of language, looking at a parent's smile, or playing "peek-a-boo", lay pathways in the brain that facilitate later learning. New brain imaging technologies have provided us with pictures that allow us to see the explosion of brain development that occurs in the first year of life. The family environment plays a critical role in the infant's language and brain development. It is also in the first three years that the child makes the most dramatic gains in language. There is an explosion in vocabulary and sentence use.

The child's early experience of the world is active. He or she seeks order and to understand the basic functions of the objects and people in the world - what one can do with things, what things can do, and the flow of how different people interact with each other. The infant will reach and lift his or her arms up to the mother - communicating his or her wish to be lifted months before the gesture is accompanied by the word "up." The infant whose mother, father or sibling routinely responds to the gesture, with words and body movements, and sounds (e.g., lifting, hugs, smiles, an "oooh" sound), will begin to develop confidence in his or her ability to effect the world

through communication. Pathways for language will be cultivated.

When we communicate with our children, which involves both speaking and listening, we are teaching far more than words and sentences. We are letting them know that what they have to communicate and share is important, that they are important, and that we value their contribution. Over time, children who have the experience of sharing in dialogue with their parents will not only have more information to bring to new learning situations, but will be more likely to invest themselves in learning. They will understand that their active contribution to the process of learning is valued and that adults will be interested in helping them achieve their goals.

5. *So that is why talking to your child is so important?*

Yes. For many years researchers have tried to understand why some children do better than others at school. One of the main reasons they are now know is one of the most important is how much parents talk to their children. Exposure to language (talking to your child) from birth to age three – the more the better - is essential for later success at school!

6. *How did researchers figure this out?*

There have been many different studies but in one study, researchers visited a number of different families and studied how parents talked to their children – how much parents praised their children, what they talked about and whether the conversation was positive or negative. Then they waited till children were nine

<p>7. <i>Wow so talking to your child before three is really important! But how do you talk to a baby?</i></p>	<p>and then checked how they were doing in school. They found that children from poor families hear about 600 words an hour, while parents from professional families heard about 2100 words an hour! And they found that the greater number of words children heard from their parents or caregivers before they were three, the better they did in school.</p> <p>From a baby's first smiles and coos they are trying to communicate. All through their first year, you can do a lot to encourage your baby's communication skills. And it's easy. All you need do is smile, talk, sing, and read to your baby. These early speech and language skills are associated with success in developing reading, writing, and interpersonal skills, both later in childhood and later in life. Long before they can speak clearly, babies understand the general meaning of what you're saying. They also absorb your emotional tone. Encourage your baby's early attempts to communicate with you with your loving attention.</p>
<p>8. <i>How should one give this loving attention?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smile often at your baby, especially when your baby is cooing, gurgling, or otherwise vocalizing with baby talk.• Look at your baby as he or she babbles and laughs, rather than looking away, interrupting, or talking with someone else.• Be patient as you try to decode your infant's baby talk and

<p>9. <i>And I guess from the above study, talking lots to your baby is also important?</i></p> <p>10. <i>Do you have some tips for talking to babies?</i></p>	<p>nonverbal communication, like facial expressions, gurgling, or babbling sounds that could signal either frustration or joy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make time to give your baby lots of loving attention, so your baby can "speak" to you with his or her baby talk, even when you're busy with other tasks. <p>Importantly imitate your baby – copying what your baby, you'll send an important message: what your baby is feeling and trying to communicate matters to you.</p> <p>Babies love to hear you talk -- especially to them, and especially in a warm, happy voice. Babies learn to speak by imitating the sounds they hear around them. So the more you talk to your baby, the faster your baby will acquire speech and language skills.</p> <p>Engage your baby's listening skills by talking often to your baby throughout your day, narrating your activities together. Talk as you're feeding, dressing, carrying, and bathing your baby, so he or she begins to associate these sounds of language with everyday objects and activities.</p> <p>Repeat simple words like "mama" and "bottle" often and clearly so your baby begins to hear familiar words and associate them with their meaning. When your baby makes noises or little cooing sounds, listen and have a conversation by copying her sounds and taking turns.</p>
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<p><i>11. And what about talking to toddlers?</i></p>	<p>When your baby is very small he will like to grasp your finger and enjoy the feeling of your hands on his body. Call him by his name as the sound of your voice will help relax and soothe him. You could also introduce family members.</p> <p>Sing to your baby, even if you don't think you sound great. Your baby will love hearing your voice, and any song will do.</p> <p>Learning to talk is one of the most important and complex skills your child will accomplish. It seems to happen naturally, but in fact you have a very important role to play. The more you talk to your baby, the more you enable her to become a good talker and a confident, happy child.</p>
<p><i>12. Do you have some tips to support this?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk about what you're doing throughout the day – when you're bathing or feeding your baby, or changing her nappy.• Talk about the things you see on the way to the shops, or at the supermarket. Try to talk about the things your child shows an interest in.• Talk in the language that you know best. It doesn't have to be English.• Look at your baby as you talk and give him time to respond to your chatter.• Cuddle up together and read a favourite book or talk about the pictures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have fun with nursery rhymes and songs, especially those with actions.• Listen carefully and give your toddler time to finish talking.• If your toddler says something incorrectly, say it back the right way e.g. “Goggy bited it.” “Yes, the dog bit it, didn’t he.”• Try to watch TV together so you can talk about what happens.
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Conclusion
<p>Talking to your child from birth is essential for exposing your child to language and thus developing the child's language. Teach your child songs and rhymes as this helps their language development. Reading aloud to your child is essential for language, brain and social development. There much more to cover on this topic. Next week we'll continue this discussion with a particular focus on English. Is it important or not?</p>

Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Ensure lots of talking to their children from birth and communicating with them often and positively
- Make time to include regular reading aloud time with children
- Caregivers choose mother tongue learning environments for their small children/ and or language they are strongest in (e.g. English)