



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **Talking to your child – language development
Part 2 (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 2

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. All it takes is your love, play and talk.

Last week we discussed how 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! We know children learn by listening and watching - so talk to your child, sing songs and rhymes, look at books together.

We discussed that 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. But what about English? How important is this?

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Isn't it important to talk to your child in English?</i></p>	<p>Studies have shown that it is really important to talk to your child in your mother tongue as it is the language you are best at. It takes many years to learn your mother tongue well, and reading and talking about books in your mother tongue enriches your children's language – and it gives your children the head start they need for successful learning at school.</p>
<p>2. <i>But what if we are a bilingual family?</i></p>	<p>In South Africa, many homes are bilingual or multilingual. This is not a problem – in fact, it is a wonderful resource for children! They can transfer the concepts, knowledge and language that they learn in one language to another one. Children are also able to learn in two languages at</p>

<p>3. <i>Eventually children will probably have to learn in English at school - isn't it important to give them a head start?</i></p> <p>4. <i>So as a parent, what are some activities I can do with my child to support language development?</i></p>	<p>the same time! So if, for example, Mom's mother tongue is isiXhosa and Dad's mother tongue is Sesotho, and each of them usually speaks their language to their baby, he or she will grow up learning two languages. If you and other adults in your home each <i>want</i> to use your mother tongue to share books with your children, this is fine. The important thing is to make sure that your baby or child understands you, and is having an enjoyable and satisfying time.</p> <p>Although it's a good idea to keep reading to your children in their mother tongue, when they start to learn an additional language at school, reading picture books in this 'new' language to them will help them to learn the language more easily. So, if you are able to, once your children are of school-going age, don't be afraid of talking and reading in your mother tongue plus other languages your child may be learning at school. To help your children have the very best chance at success at school, here's the golden rule: start talking and reading to them in your mother tongue/s when they are babies, keep doing this throughout their lives and as they learn other languages at school, start reading to them in these languages too!</p> <p>According to language experts, what a child needs to express himself well, (in English or any other specific language) is a "<i>large database in his brain of reliably</i></p>
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correct and sophisticated language patterns." Therefore talking lots to your child is important. Additionally learning songs and rhymes and reading aloud to your child, from very young, are really important. Teach them plenty of poems, nursery rhymes or songs. In doing so, you will be building a megastore of interesting and sophisticated language in their brains, from which they can draw when producing their own oral or written communication.

5. *How do you teach Poems and Nursery Rhymes to Children?*

Pick one poem or nursery rhyme or song and repeat it line by line each day until your child knows it by heart. Then choose a new poem but keep practicing the old one too. Remember to make it fun – as this is the way that children learn! Give your child lots of opportunities to recite her poems for an audience - grandparents, friends or any others who will appreciate and praise her efforts. Keep building more poems and songs learned by heart and soon your child will have a collection of poems she will remember for her lifetime.

6. *What about reading aloud?*

Research has shown that reading to children significantly raises their potential for academic and life-long success. We will talk more about how to do this during our next show, but most important is to do as often as possible, but at least 15 minutes every day!

<p>7. <i>And what if I have concerns about my child's language development?</i></p>	<p>All children develop at different paces. However if your child is still not being understood by familiar adults by three, you might want to ask your doctor for a referral to a specialist speech therapist who can help you assess if there are any problems, and find ways to address these. Importantly difficulties with speech and language development can sometimes be a sign of hearing difficulties – for example glue ear. Glue ear occurs when the space behind the ear drum (middle ear) is filled with fluid. If both ears have fluid, your child's hearing can be significantly reduced. Hearing loss for prolonged periods of time during the early years may affect speech and language development. If you are concerned about this, take your child for a check up at your local clinic.</p>
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<p>Conclusion</p>
<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.</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)